

# BREASTFEEDING PROMOTES EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

## IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUITY OF CARE



Breastfeeding duration and early brain development can be positively impacted by providing families with breastfeeding education and support, as well as coordination of ongoing community and clinical efforts.



### NUTRIENTS FOR EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Breastmilk contains a variety of nutrients and proteins that are crucial for early brain development. This includes growth factors and hormones that cannot be replicated in infant formula.<sup>1</sup>



### HIGHER EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Studies show that infants who are breastfed have better educational outcomes as children and teens.<sup>2,3,4</sup>



### COGNITIVE AND SOCIO- EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Breastfeeding plays an important role in strengthening an infant's sensory and emotional circuitry, which are important for both cognitive and socio-emotional development. This is because breastfeeding involves parent-to-infant touch and nurturing interactions.<sup>5,6</sup>

# PROMOTING BREASTFEEDING THROUGH PEER AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

## STATE EXAMPLES



The Delaware Division of Public Health used the training curricula *Loving Support Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together* to train peer counselors on how to support pregnant and breastfeeding mothers in WIC programs at home through telephone contacts.



The Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates (COBA), in collaboration with the Oklahoma State Department of Health, adopted a community support model for breastfeeding, Baby Cafés, to provide a site for women to meet with other nursing mothers, talk to facilitators, and ask questions of certified lactation consultants.



The Washington, DC Department of Health, in collaboration with the Washington, DC Breastfeeding Coalition, leveraged their relationship with Children's National Health System (CNHS) to create a coordinated care team linking women who deliver at United Medical Center to counseling and healthcare resources. Peer counselors saw women immediately postpartum to encourage new mothers to breastfeed.



### CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND BREASTFEEDING THROUGH HOME-VISITING PROGRAMS

Healthy Families America is a national model of home visiting that offers home-based services to promote optimal child and family development, including screenings for child development and assessments to determine risk for adverse childhood experiences.

**FAMILY CONNECTS** is an evidence-based home visiting program where nurses provide support to families by addressing maternal and infant health concerns and connecting families to community services based on individual needs.

**NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP** is a home visiting program where nurses provide care and support to first-time parents and their babies on topics including breastfeeding, nutrition, and child development.

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<sup>1</sup> [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23721722](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23721722/)

<sup>2</sup> [thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(15\)70002-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(15)70002-1/fulltext)

<sup>3</sup> [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27480198](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27480198/)

<sup>4</sup> [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10920158](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/10920158/)

<sup>5</sup> [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23721722](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23721722/)

<sup>6</sup> [ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6096620/](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6096620/)

Healthy Families America - [healthyfamiliesamerica.org](https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org)

Family Connects - [familyconnects.org](https://www.familyconnects.org)

Nurse-Family Partnership - [nursefamilypartnership.org](https://www.nursefamilypartnership.org)