

Facilitator Guide

A Gift for You and Me!

Supporting Breastfeeding Conversations in CAPCHP Sites

Purpose

A Gift for You and Me! is a children's storybook and parent guide designed to help normalize breastfeeding and create opportunities for positive, family centred conversations about infant feeding, bonding and early relationships.

The resource can be used within Community Action for Prenatal and Child Health Program (CAPCHP) settings as one component of broader efforts to protect, promote and support breastfeeding.

It is intended to complement, not replace, local breastfeeding education, skilled breastfeeding support and referral to appropriate health care providers.

How the Resource Supports Breastfeeding

The book can help programs:

Breastfeeding in everyday life

Children and families see breastfeeding represented as a part of everyday family life.

Build breastfeeding knowledge

The parent guidance introduces simple, evidence informed information about breastfeeding, infant cues, milk production, skin-to-skin contact and family support.

Support informed decision making

Families receive clear information about breastfeeding while recognizing that individual circumstances and feeding experiences differ.

Strengthen family support

The story provides opportunities to discuss how partners, grandparents, siblings, friends and communities can support breastfeeding families.

Connect families with support

Facilitators can use the book as a starting point for conversations about local breastfeeding services, peer support and when additional help may be needed.

Connection to Breastfeeding Indicators

Program activities using *A Gift for You and Me!* can contribute to conditions that support important breastfeeding outcomes, including:

- Informed decision making
- breastfeeding initiation
- exclusive breastfeeding
- breastfeeding duration
- access to breastfeeding information and support
- family and social support for breastfeeding
- connection with community breastfeeding resources

The resource is particularly suited to supporting the knowledge, attitudes and social environments that influence these outcomes.

Suggested Uses

During Pregnancy

Introduce the book during prenatal groups or individual visits. Can read the book together or provide a copy of the book to parents so they can follow up with discussions and questions.

Facilitators might ask:

"What have you heard about breastfeeding?"

"What makes breastfeeding special for baby and for the breastfeeding parent?"

"When is the best time to start skin-to-skin contact?"

"Why is skin-to-skin contact important?"

"Who will be around to support you after your baby is born?"

Use the discussion to provide accurate information, explore questions and identify local breastfeeding supports before birth.

Demonstrate hand expression and opportunity for colostrum collection during pregnancy. Refer to infographic on expressing milk at michelleledrew.ca/babygift.

Use this time to discuss the importance of exclusive breastfeeding to six months and continue breastfeeding after introduction of complementary foods to two years and beyond.

With New Parents

Read selected pages or use the illustrations to begin conversations about:

- feeding cues
- skin-to-skin contact
- how breastfeeding works (review latch illustrations)
- normal early breastfeeding experiences
- getting help early when difficulties arise
- ways family members can support breastfeeding

In CAPCHP Family Programs

Use the story during family reading time, parent child groups or activities involving older siblings.

The story can help children understand that breastfeeding is one way babies are cared for and that everyone in a family can have an important role when a new baby arrives.

With Partners and Families

Invite partners, grandparents and other support people into the conversation.

Ask:

"What are some things family members can do to make breastfeeding easier for a new parent?"

Encourage practical support such as helping with meals, household responsibilities, babthing baby, diaper changes, caring for older children and supporting the parent's breastfeeding goals.

"What are some ways partners can feel included and connected to their new baby?"

Encourage skin-to-skin contact, cuddling, rocking and reading A Gift for You and Me! together.

Facilitator Principles

When using the resource:

Keep breastfeeding visible and positive.

Present breastfeeding as the recommended and part of everyday experiences of new families.

Provide accurate information.

Use current Canadian breastfeeding guidance and local policies and resources.

Avoid judgment.

Families may express their milk and feed by a bottle or use commercial infant formula or other feeding approaches for medical or personal reasons. Children and families should never be encouraged to judge another family's feeding experience.

Follow the International Code.

Avoid materials, samples or messaging that promote commercial breastmilk substitutes, bottles or teats.

Know where to refer.

Facilitators should know how families can access skilled breastfeeding assessment and support in their community.

A Simple Activity

After reading the story, ask families:

"What helps a breastfeeding parent and baby?"

Participants can identify ideas such as:

- encouragement
- skin-to-skin time
- responding to baby's feeding cues
- practical help at home
- having someone to call with questions
- connecting with breastfeeding support

Finish by sharing the program's local breastfeeding resources and referral information.

Using the Resource as Part of a Baby-Friendly Program

A Gift for You and Me! works best when it is part of a broader breastfeeding supportive environment where families:

see breastfeeding, hear positive breastfeeding messages, receive accurate information, feel supported in their decisions and know where to find help.

The goal is not simply to read a book. It is to use the story to make breastfeeding **visible, familiar and easier to talk about** within families and communities.