

Preschool Educator Guide

A Gift for You and Me!

Talking About Breastfeeding, Babies and Families Through Story

About the Book

A Gift for You and Me! is a children's storybook and parent guide about breastfeeding, bonding and growing together.

Through gentle rhymes and illustrations, children see breastfeeding as a normal part of caring for a baby while exploring relationships between babies, parents, siblings and other family members.

For preschool settings, educators can use the **children's story independently from the parent guidance pages**.

Why Include Breastfeeding in Early Learning?

Young children are naturally curious about babies and how they are cared for. Including breastfeeding in stories, conversations and play helps children become familiar with breastfeeding as part of everyday family life.

The story also provides opportunities to explore broader early learning concepts including:

- babies and their needs
- families and relationships
- caring and helping
- feelings and connection
- how children grow and change
- animals, nature and puffins
- similarities and differences among families

Before Reading

Introduce the story simply:

"This story is about a family with a new baby and all the ways they care for one another. Let's see what you notice."

Allow children to lead the conversation. There is no need to explain breastfeeding in detail before reading.

While Reading

Pause occasionally to invite children to look closely at the illustrations.

Try questions such as:

"What do you notice?"

"What do you think the baby needs?"

"How is the family caring for the baby?"

"What can the older child do with the baby?"

"How do you think the baby knows it is time to feed?"

"What is Pebble the Puffin doing?"

Keep the conversation relaxed and follow the children's interests.

After the Story

Caring for a Baby

Ask:

"What are some ways we can care for a baby?"

Children might identify breastfeeding, cuddling, talking, singing, playing, reading, comforting and keeping the baby safe.

How Can I Help?

Talk about ways older children can be involved when there is a new baby in the family.

Ideas might include:

- choosing a book to read together
- singing to the baby
- bringing something to the parent
- having cuddle time
- talking or playing gently with the baby
- helping with simple family routines

Reinforce the message that **there are many ways for children to have a special relationship with a new baby.**

Extend the Learning

Dramatic play

Include baby dolls, books, blankets and other familiar caregiving materials in the play area. Allow children to decide naturally how they care for and feed their babies.

Art

Invite children to draw a picture of someone caring for a baby or something they like to do with their own family.

Puffin exploration

Use Pebble the Puffin to introduce children to puffins, their habitats and how animal parents care for their young.

Family discussion

Ask children about things their families do together that help them feel loved and cared for.

When Children Ask About Breastfeeding

Young children may ask direct questions. Simple, factual answers are usually enough.

"The baby is drinking milk from their mother's breast."

"Breastmilk is food for babies."

"Babies often breastfeed when they are hungry, and sometimes breastfeeding also helps them feel close and comforted."

There is no need to provide more information than the child is asking for.

Respecting Different Families

Children may share that they, a sibling or another baby they know was fed differently.

Acknowledge their experience without comparing or judging families.

For example:

"Families can have different experiences. In this story, the baby breastfeeds."

Educators can provide accurate, positive information about breastfeeding while reinforcing respect for every child and family.

Key Messages for Educators

- Breastfeeding can be presented naturally as part of everyday family life.
- Use simple, age appropriate language.
- Let children's questions guide the discussion.
- Avoid suggesting that breasts or breastfeeding are embarrassing or something that must be hidden.
- Do not ask children or families to disclose personal infant feeding experiences.
- Keep discussions about different feeding experiences respectful and nonjudgmental.
- Focus on caring, relationships and the many ways family members can connect with a baby.

The Main Message

A Gift for You and Me! gives preschool educators a simple way to make breastfeeding **visible, familiar and comfortable to talk about** while helping children explore an idea they already understand:

Babies need food, comfort, love and care, and everyone in a family can have an important role.

View printable resources for preschoolers at michelleledrew.ca/babygift