New UNICEF Baby Friendly Standards briefing for antenatal education

The Baby Friendly Initiative is a worldwide programme of the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, established in the UK in 1994. The Baby Friendly Initiative works with UK public sector services (maternity, neonatal, health visitor (or specialist public health nursing) and early years community settings and services, to promote and support breastfeeding. We believe that supporting parents to establish and build a close loving relationship is important for all babies no matter what their decision on feeding is.

These new standards incorporate and expand on the previous standards specified in ‘Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding’ and the ‘7 Point Plan for Sustaining Breastfeeding in the Community’ to fully reflect the evidence base on delivering the best outcomes for mother and babies in the UK.

Implementing these standards will improve upon the current care and support that pregnant women, new mothers and their families receive to build strong relationships with, and feed and care for, their baby.

There are three key stages:

**STAGE 1**

Building a firm foundation

1. Have written policies and guidelines to support the standards.
2. Plan an education programme that will allow staff to implement the standards according to their role.
3. Have processes for implementing, auditing and evaluating the standards.
4. Ensure that there is no promotion of breast milk substitutes, bottles, teats or dummies in any part of the facility or by any of the staff.

**STAGE 2**

An educated workforce

Educate staff to implement the standards according to their role and service provided. In practice, this means that antenatal education staff and all partners involved in the delivery of antenatal education are supported and trained in the skills they need to implement the standards.
STAGE 3

Parents’ experiences of maternity services
1. Support pregnant women to recognise the importance of breastfeeding and early relationships for the health and wellbeing of their baby.
2. Support all mothers and babies to initiate a close relationship and feeding soon after birth.
3. Enable mothers to get breastfeeding off to a good start.
4. Support mothers to make informed decisions regarding the introduction of food or fluids other than breast milk, enabling mothers to continue breastfeeding for as long as they wish.
5. Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby through frequent skin-to-skin contact, eye-to-eye contact and gentle verbal communication (including that this is good for their baby’s brain development) will help them get to know their baby.

Parents’ experiences of neonatal units
1. Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.
2. Enable babies to receive breast milk and to breastfeed when possible.
3. Value parents as partners in care.

Parents’ experiences of health visiting/public health nursing services
1. Support pregnant women to recognise the importance of breastfeeding and early relationships for the health and wellbeing of their baby.
2. Enable mothers to continue breastfeeding for as long as they wish.
3. Support mothers to make informed decisions regarding the introduction of food or fluids other than breast milk.
4. Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.

Parents’ experiences of children’s centres or equivalent early years settings in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
1. Support pregnant women to recognise the importance of breastfeeding and early relationships for the health and wellbeing of their baby.
2. Protect and support breastfeeding in all areas of the service.
3. Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby.

Re-accreditation

In order to demonstrate innovation to achieve excellent outcomes for mothers, babies and their families, a ‘transition timetable’ document was introduced in January 2014, which will finish in July 2016. There will then be the expectation that all the standards will be met in full in order to achieve Baby Friendly accreditation.

This document is entitled: Moving from the current to the new Baby Friendly Initiative standards: A guide for those working towards or maintaining a Baby Friendly accreditation.


Examples of good practice and innovation to achieve excellent outcomes for mothers and their partners, babies and their families should be shared and promoted reflecting the importance of the Scottish antenatal parent education programme.

UNICEF key points for conversations

UNICEF has also produced guidance for key points in conversations:

• with parents during pregnancy
• in the postnatal period
• for the health visiting team.


Pregnancy and the antenatal period is an important time for mothers-to-be (and their partners) to spend a little time discussing their hopes and feelings, which will help them become more confident parents. Relationships can come under particular stress during this time. The early postnatal period is equally important and spending a little time discussing how things are going and how they are feeling will help.

This involves finding out what an individual mother’s needs and concerns are so that information and support can be tailored to meet these needs. Each mother will have different needs, so taking time to find out what these are will assist you in providing relevant information and support rather than a ‘one size fits all’ checklist.

Asking the mother open questions will encourage her to tell you her story. Be aware of your body language and listening skills. To gain her trust it is important to be non-judgemental and accept what she is saying even if you disagree. A woman will not take on board new information until she believes you have taken her worries and concerns seriously.
## Conversations in pregnancy: Key points

### Remember: explore what parents already know ➔ accept ➔ offer relevant information *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Encouraging parents to connect with their baby</td>
<td>Taking time out to connect: talking to baby, noticing and responding to movements</td>
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| Skin contact                               | The value of skin contact  
What this means for mother and baby                                         |
| Responding to baby’s needs                 | How closeness, comfort and love can help baby’s brain develop  
Responsive feeding                                                      |
| Feeding                                    | Value of breastfeeding as protection, comfort and food  
How to get off to a good start                                                 |

*Confirmation that a conversation has taken place to cover relationship building, responsiveness and feeding, as per mother’s needs*

- **Signature:**
- **Date:**
- **Comments:**

1

2

3

*refer to the health professionals’ guide for more information*
All mothers are offered support with
• Unhurried skin contact
• Recognising early feeding cues
• Offering the first feed in skin contact

After birth

Postnatal

Breastfeeding assessments carried out using the breastfeeding assessment form (minimum of two in the first ten days) and an appropriate plan of care made. This may include referral for additional/specialist support.

Breastfeeding mothers are offered support to
• Hand express
• Value exclusive breastfeeding
• Understand how to know their baby is getting enough milk
• Access help with feeding when at home

Mothers who formula feed are offered support to
• Sterilise equipment and make up feeds
• Feed their baby first milks
• Limit the number of people who feed their baby

*refer to the health professionals’ guide for more information
Conversations for the health visiting team: Key points

Remember: explore what parents already know → accept → offer relevant information*

All breastfeeding mother/baby dyads should have a feeding assessment using the breastfeeding assessment form during the new birth visit and an appropriate plan of care made. This may include referral for additional/specialist support.

New birth visit

All mothers are offered support and information on:
- The importance of closeness and responsiveness for mother–baby wellbeing
- How to hold their baby for feeding
- Responsive feeding
- Where to access feeding and social support within the local area
- Caring for their baby at night

All breastfeeding mothers are offered support and information on:
- Why hand expression is a useful skill and how to do it
- How to recognise effective feeding
- The value of breastfeeding

Mothers who formula feed are offered support to:
- Sterilise equipment and make up feeds
- Feed their baby first milks
- Limit the number of people who feed their baby

Continued breastfeeding

All mothers are offered support and information on:
- Appropriate introduction of solid foods

All breastfeeding mothers are offered support and information on:
- Feeding while out and about
- Maximising breast milk if other milks have been introduced
- Continuing to breastfeed upon return to work

*refer to the health professionals’ guide for more information: www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/conversations
Further information


10. The Information Centre for Health and Social Care. Infant Feeding Survey 2010