

Blog entry 3/11/22

Breasts are made for breastfeeding.

“Thank you so much! It’s been a huge help to be able to nurse her directly now.”

“The therapy session helped a ton, and my baby was able to latch on over the weekend and is nursing great!”

Breastfeeding is healthier for parents.

Less likely to have pp depression

Diabetes and breast cancer.

In later life, less chance of stroke, heart disease and high blood pressure.

Breastfed babies are:

Have fewer ear infections, fewer allergies, less diarrhea and less constipation.

Breastfed babies need to be hospitalized less often.

Babies do ok on formula, but they do better if they are breastfed.

“Breastfeeding is linked to a reduced risk for many illnesses in children and mothers. National guidelines recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life and continued breastfeeding for at least the first year. Although breastfeeding initiation rates are high in the United States, most women don’t breastfeed for the entire first year. Strategies like peer support, education, longer maternity leaves, and breastfeeding support in the hospital, workplace, and community may help more women breastfeed longer.”

-Healthy People 2030

% of babies who are BF at one year 2015 35.9

2030 target 54.1

Breastfeeding is linked to a reduced risk for many illnesses in children and mothers. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of life is linked to health benefits for infants. Although breastfeeding initiation rates are high in the United States, most women don’t breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months. Strategies like peer support, education, longer maternity leaves, and breastfeeding support in the hospital, workplace, and community may help more women breastfeed exclusively.

24.9% 2015

Target 42.4%

Promote, protect and support Breastfeeding/ chestfeeding

World Health Organization

Global Breastfeeding Collective

Breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure child health and survival. Breastmilk contains antibodies that help protect against many common childhood illnesses. Breastfed children perform better on intelligence tests and are less likely to be overweight or obese later in life. Women who breastfeed also have a reduced risk of cancer and type II diabetes. It is estimated that inadequate breastfeeding is responsible for 16% of child deaths each year. Global BF Collective

Breastfeeding is life-saving, cost-effective and fundamental to building a healthier world. Protection, promotion and support for breastfeeding helps fulfil every child's right to health, survival and development³

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on the Rights of the Child. Convention on the Rights of the Child. 1989, art. 21 & 24

and the right of women to have access to appropriate services⁴ and special protection "before and after childbirth, including paid leave or leave with adequate social security benefits".⁵ We are calling on governments to make evidence-base

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 10 (2)

Every new parent wants to do the best for their child and when challenges come up, there is often a search for something to do to help.

When a lactation consultant (LC) suggests that a baby receives CranioSacral Therapy, it is often after much work has been done, such as nursing positional changes, latching advice and counseling to achieve adequate milk supply. The LC and even the parent notices that the baby is still struggling and exhibiting tension in the mouth, neck and body. They may be extra fussy, hard to settle or rigid feeling when being held.

Infant CranioSacral Therapy can be a gentle way to help detect and address restrictions and tension in the body so that a baby can nurse effectively and comfortably. One parent recently remarked during a session that she had never seen her baby so relaxed. This particular 5 week old baby was releasing tension from the shoulders into the base of the skull. The muscles were softening and there was a palpable heat

release. The baby would cry out for what seemed like a sentence or two and then get calm, as if she was telling a story of her struggles or stress from her early life. Toward the end of the session, the mom tried to nurse and said that her baby had a nice deep, comfortable latch and the baby was effectively transferring milk.

There are times immediately after birth when the baby and mom did not get to do skin to skin contact for the first hour, or the time was interrupted with medical procedures. As part of the UNICEF/WHO Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative, which are policies to support mothers in their choice to breastfeed, skin to skin for the first hour has been shown to help get breastfeeding off to a good start. It allows the baby to go through 9 instinctual stages that results in the baby self-attaching and suckling.

In my office, as a Certified Lactation Counselor, I can inform moms about how to reintroduce skin to skin contact at home to help the baby re-connect to instinctual self-attaching. For one mom, a combination of CST for her baby and spending time at home with skin to skin helped her establish breastfeeding at the breast for the first time since birth.

During our session together, the mom said that even though she had the baby on her chest after birth, her baby never latched on. She had been feeding breastmilk through a bottle since then, but really wanted to be able to nurse directly. I worked with the baby helping to release diaphragm restrictions in the body and then tuned into some tightness in the intercranial membranes, which are part of the craniosacral system. I was able to gently help the baby release the tight tissues at the upper palate and sphenoid. The baby's face seemed to float towards my hand and the felt inner compression disappeared. The baby's suck improved and felt more established rather than shallow and tentative. In the office, mom spent some time with her baby skin to skin and we were able to witness some of the 9 instinctual stages such as crawling toward the breast and familiarization of the breast. This gave her confidence to let her baby take her time and trust that her baby knows what to do.

Support for the breastfeeding dyad can be much like a back-and-forth dance between lactation consultant, craniosacral therapist and the family's commitment to breastfeeding. Together, we can all foster an environment where babies can be nourished and thrive.

I see my work as a CranioSacral Therapist and Lactation Counselor a small way to support the much larger world initiative to support, promote and protect breastfeeding as a public health initiative.