

Young Moms

Breastfeeding, Barriers and Empowerment

"Autumn's story" BFB volunteer

...my birth was done to me, they didn't ask permission to touch me, see what I needed or even act like I had a choice...because I am young they thought I didn't know what I wanted.


...but I did knowI wanted to breastfeed my baby...

I nursed my baby at **my boob** -no one else could do that for him...not my stepmom, not my boyfriend not the caseworker. It was all me and that made me feel powerful ...it was my choice!"

Barriers to Breastfeeding Support

- Assumptions: things you think you know about me, but you don't made by society, family and healthcare professionals that young moms can't or won't breastfeed.
- Lack of age appropriate breastfeeding information/ resources adults that see first learning and full of things shared prenatally.
- Myths rumors and things we look at on YouTube about common challenges .

Imagine...



- You are 16 with a new baby
- You want to hang out with your friends at the mall, but they actually remind you of everything you lost..your freedom and choices.
- You don't fit in anymore..you are lonely.
- So you try a playgroup at the EYC ... everyone is "30 something" . You listen from a distance as they talk about their partners and summer vacations... they remind you of things you don't have and want.
- You don't fit in again... you feel bad about yourself and your parenting.... you are alone.

Lessons Learned From Young Moms

- I am a parent, but also a teenager, I am still learning.
- Judgment makes me not ask for help.
- "Only assume that I can do it...or that I am doing it" then offer support.
- Peer pressure isn't always bad it can be a great motivator.

Successful Strategies (so far)

- Use lots of hands on teaching tools to explain breastfeeding. **Stuff you can see and touch.**
- **Resources need to have lots of colours, humour, pictures and positive messages. Less words .**
- To recruit young breastfeeding moms as peer volunteers, do face to face interviews about their experience. **The less paperwork the better.**
- Plan extra time to hang out with young moms and check in with them regularly..**but not like a parent or caseworker** about volunteering.

Continued..

- Provide time for me to share about what I have learned- **let me be the expert!**
- **Tell me when I'm doing a great job**- positive feedback is HUGE!
- Discuss possible money saved first before the benefits of breastfeeding. **Such as new clothes, paying rent etc.**
- Always provide food!!! **Not health food approved stuff** .

"My friends at the house were the ones who helped me with breastfeeding when things got hard. They knew what it was like. If they could do it so could I. Now I help other moms as a peer."

"Breastfeeding is so amazing, my body is amazing and now so is my baby."

Teen BFB Volunteer



Remember...

Peer Support Works For Young moms.