



## National Breastfeeding Month

August is National Breastfeeding Month — a month dedicated to advancing advocacy, protection, and promotion of breastfeeding to ensure that **all** families have the opportunity to breastfeed.

**[NEW AUG. 24 WEBINAR: Centering Community Voices: Solutions to Safe Sleep and Breastfeeding Using a QI Framework](#)**

### EQUITY & BREASTFEEDING RATES

Equity gaps in access to resources and support create troubling disparities for breastfeeding mothers and birthing people. NICHQ works to close the gaps and achieve equity in all forms, including race, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability.

**Chestfeeding** [is the process of feeding a child human milk from a person's chest](#). The term can be used by anyone, but often is used by transgender and nonbinary people when the words *breastfeeding* or *nursing* are not an ideal fit. *Read more about NICHQ's language evolution in this [article](#) by COO Heidi Brooks.*

## Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Birthing People

Rates of breastfeeding in the U.S. vary widely because of the multiple and complex barriers new parents face when starting and continuing to breastfeed. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed or chestfed for about the first 6 months with continued feeding while introducing appropriate complementary foods for one year or longer. Yet, many mothers and birthing people struggle to reach their breastfeeding goals, and sixty percent do not breastfeed as long as they intended to.

The AAP [recently updated its Breastfeeding Policy Statement](#) to call for more human milk feeding support – particularly for Black mothers and birthing people. They urge that implicit bias, structural bias, and systemic racism must be addressed in order to improve existing disparities in human milk feeding.

This August, we join the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee in recognizing [National Breastfeeding Month](#). At NICHQ, we are committed to making breastfeeding and infant safe sleep the national norm. Help us spread the word about the benefits of breastfeeding and learn how you can support mothers and birthing people to ensure every child can achieve their optimal health!

## New AAP Policy Statement

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has released a [new policy recommendation](#) on human milk feeding with important health equity implications. Alongside offering key recommendations for the use of human milk, the statement acknowledges that because of social and systemic barriers to human milk feeding efforts, supporting parents who choose human milk feeding requires social and systemic change.

## [Learn with NICHQ](#)

Health professionals must understand the challenges mothers and birthing people experience to provide adequate education and support to increase breastfeeding rates. Watch past webinars to help improve conversations about [breastfeeding](#) and [safe sleep](#). Read insights related to our [breastfeeding](#) and safe sleep work, and browse resources, including this [helpful series](#) on how to build on campaigns with conversations.



## HELPFUL ARTICLES

- How to increase [Cultural Sensitivity for Better Breastfeeding Outcomes](#)
- [Applying an Equity Lens to Safe Sleep and Breastfeeding Efforts](#)

## Celebrate Black Breastfeeding Week



NICHQ recognizes Black Breastfeeding Week, held annually

August 25-31, during the last week of National Breastfeeding Month. [Black Breastfeeding Week](#) was created by Kimberly Seals Allers, Kiddada Green, and Anayah Sangidele-Ayoka to highlight the unique challenges and triumphs of Black breastfeeding mothers and birthing people.

Systemic barriers to breastfeeding prevent many Black women and birthing people from reaching their breastfeeding goals, leading African Americans to have the lowest breastfeeding initiation and duration rates in comparison to other ethnic groups.



## Connecting Breastfeeding Safety & Safe Infant Sleep

Breastfeeding or chestfeeding brings a variety of health benefits for babies. Mothers and birthing people with young babies need support to continue breastfeeding while ensuring infants sleep safely.

Explore our resources to promote and encourage healthy sleep habits:

- Dispell **common myths and facts** about [safe infant sleep and breastfeeding](#)
- Educate childcare providers and caregivers with [resources about safe sleep practices](#)
- How sleep savvy are you? [Take our safe sleep quiz to find out](#). Now on [Instagram!](#)
- Implement these [tactics and examples to support safe sleep conversations](#)



## **NICHQ's Breastfeeding and Safe Sleep Work**

The use of a health equity lens is imperative in the work of making breastfeeding and chestfeeding a national norm. We're grateful to have insight from a diverse team of faculty experts on the following project-related breastfeeding and safe sleep initiatives.

- Partnering with 70+ cross-sector, national-level organizations invested in improving and reducing disparities in infant safe sleep and breastfeeding. Providing training and resources to systems and community groups to engage families and help identify and overcome barriers in integrating safe sleep and breastfeeding. [Learn more](#)
- Providing comprehensive capacity-building assistance training for all Healthy Start programs. Includes technical assistance on high-priority topics like safe sleep, fatherhood, and breastfeeding, and training for program staff on core competencies, including leadership, quality improvement, and data and measurement. [Learn more](#)