



NICHQ Resources & Strategies to Support Breastfeeding

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.

[Listen to an episode of Before Birth & Beyond featuring a panel discussion from a NICHQ webinar focused on equity in safe sleep and breastfeeding messaging.](#)

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 60% do not breastfeed as long as they intended to.

The updated AAP [Breastfeeding Policy Statement](#) calls 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 to improve existing disparities in human milk feeding.



Credit: Erin Fortuna, Senior Collective Impact Coordinator, USBC.

This August, we join the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee (USBC) in recognizing [National Breastfeeding Month](#) and the 2024 theme, ***Nourish, Sustain, Thrive***. This year's theme serves to shine a light on why protecting, promoting, and supporting lactation is so important for the human life cycle, honors the work organizations are doing to make the world more friendly for new parents and families, and highlights how individuals, funders, and policymakers can contribute to a strong and sustainable lactation field.

At NICHQ, we are committed to increasing community and provider awareness and knowledge about breastfeeding or chestfeeding and safe infant sleep. Help us spread the word about the benefits of babies receiving human milk and learn how you can support mothers and birthing people to ensure every child can achieve their optimal health.

[Myth vs Fact: Breastfeeding](#)

Help new parents and caregivers dispell safe infant sleep and breastfeeding myths with helpful handouts, created through the [National Action Partnership to Promote Safe Sleep Improvement and Innovation Network \(NAPPSS-IIN\)](#) project. The resources have been [translated into 11 different languages](#) to ensure health professionals and community advocates have the opportunity to reach more mothers and birthing people.

[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.



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:

- 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.

- 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](#)
- NICHQ and the AAP support pediatric health care practitioners to provide evidence-based counseling and education to infant caregivers and families. The purpose of this program is to reduce overall rates of sudden unexpected infant death (SUID) and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in SUID; to guide system improvements; and to identify and support policy changes that address state- and community-specific SUID risks. [Learn more](#)

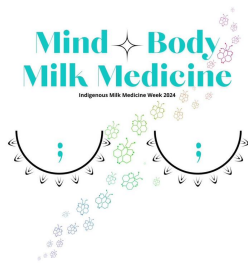
Weekly Observances

Join NICHQ in celebrating the 2024 National Breastfeeding Month theme, **Nourish, Sustain, Thrive**, with weekly observances that highlight the importance of breastfeeding equity.



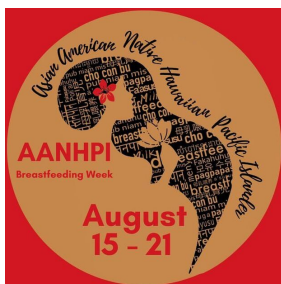
Week 1 (August 1-7): World Breastfeeding Week?

Theme: Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All



Week 2 (August 8-14): Indigenous Milk Medicine Week?

- Theme: Mind. Body. Milk Medicine.



Week 3 (August 15-21): Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Breastfeeding Week?



[Week 4 \(August 25-31\): Black Breastfeeding Week?](#)

[Theme: Listen Up! Reclaiming Our Narrative & Centering Our Stories for Breastfeeding Justice?](#)



Reclamando Nuestra Cultura
Por Medio de la Lactancia

[Week 5 \(September 5-11\): Semana de La Lactancia Latina](#)

[Theme: Reclaiming Culture Through Lactation](#)

[Download more resources from the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee](#)