

Opening the Discussion on Feeding

Staff in Head Start programs build the kinds of relationships with families that make a difference in breastfeeding support and education. It is critical that staff talk with each family to hear their understanding of breastfeeding and any feelings associated with it. Staff members may worry that they might make a parent feel guilty or ashamed if they offer the facts about breastfeeding. The truth is, families make the best choices they can for their babies. In conversations, recognize the demands on families, give them the latest information on breastfeeding, and problem-solve with them to identify strategies they can use to make the healthiest choices that they can for their children. Remember that you don't need to have all of the answers. Look at the resources in this guide and contact community partners if families need more than you can offer. Here are some open-ended questions that can help you open the discussion on breastfeeding:

Tell me what you have heard about breastfeeding.

How did you feed your (first) baby? What did you enjoy about that? What was hard?

How were you fed as a child? What have you learned about that from your family?

What does your partner/mother/father/grandmother/friend(s) think about breastfeeding?

Who do you know who has breastfed? What did she tell you about it?

What are the reasons that you would breastfeed?

What are your concerns?

What do you think breastfeeding would be like?

Who else have you talked to about feeding your baby? What did they share?

What questions do you have about breastfeeding?

How can I help?