

BEST SERIES MEETINGS EVER

This compilation of meeting outlines was first published as a booklet by the LLLC-BC/Yukon Area. It was sold as a fundraiser for many years and reached beyond the borders of Canada. Several generations of Leaders have come to rely on this valuable resource. We hope this updated, online version will enable Leaders to benefit from it for years to come.

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(from the original booklet)

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EXPECTATIONS

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- What benefits do you expect from breastfeeding?
- Now that you are breastfeeding, what benefits have you noticed that you perhaps weren't expecting?
- How has breastfeeding helped you fulfill the expectations you have for yourself, or that others have of you?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- What were/are your expectations of birth? How did reality meet those expectations?
- What does your family expect of the new baby? ... of you? Are they realistic?
- What do you expect from your husband after the baby arrives? ... from your other children? ... from yourself?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- What breastfeeding difficulties did you anticipate you might have? What did you do to avoid them?
- Did you have any pre-conceived ideas that caused problems with breastfeeding? How did you have to change?
- Who did you expect would teach you how to breastfeed? Did it work out that way?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- When your baby was tiny, when did you expect he would begin to really rely on foods other than breastmilk for the major part of his diet? How has this worked in actuality?
- What do you expect a meal to provide for your family? How do you accomplish this?
- When you were pregnant, how long did you expect to breastfeed? Compare this with your expectations now. Have they changed? Why or how?

THIS BABY IS GOING TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- List on a poster the ways in which a baby changes your life. Discuss how breastfeeding makes those changes easier to handle.
- What is one positive way in which *you* have changed since before you were pregnant?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- How did the baby change your life *before* he was born?
- If your baby wakes at night, how do you get as much sleep as possible?
- How has each successive baby changed your life?
- Who in the family had to make the biggest adjustment when the baby arrived? How were you able to help?
- How do you find time for yourself and your personal interests? How do you and your partner create opportunities for time together?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- How has successful breastfeeding changed your life?
- What difficulties with breastfeeding have you overcome? Have they caused you to do anything differently?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Has your attitude about nutrition changed since your baby was born? What is one improvement you have made in your family's diet?
- Can life ever be "just the way it was" before your baby was born?
- What were your ideas about breastfeeding and weaning before you had a baby? For example, did you have a specific weaning age in mind? Has that changed?

BREASTFEEDING: A FOUNDATION FOR FAMILIES

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- On a poster, list the advantages of breastfeeding. Which ones are especially important to: baby? mother? baby's father? siblings?
- How does breastfeeding help your family function well?
- How would you encourage your sister or sister-in-law to breastfeed?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Who in the family had the hardest adjustment to the arrival of the baby? How did you help?
- How can every child within the family be made to feel special and yet understand that most times, baby's needs come first?
- What traits do we see in a healthy family? Name one positive trait that you feel your family has now.
- How did you include your family in your birth experience?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- How does an extended family close-at-hand help/hinder your efforts to breastfeed?
- Share a breastfeeding problem you had and how someone in your family was part of the solution?
- Where do you find your main support for breastfeeding?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Your baby is off to the best nutritional start with breastfeeding. How do you plan to continue?
- Our society seems to favour pushing children into independence rather than letting them develop at their own pace. How do you, as a mother, cope with this pressure?
- Do you feel children will develop independence on their own? What are the signs in a six-month-old? ...one-year-old? ...older child?

PRIORITIES: PEOPLE FIRST, NOT THINGS

Meeting #1: The Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- Discuss: “While giving our children the things we didn’t have, let’s not forget to give them the things we did have.”
- Why is breastfeeding important to you?
- How does breastfeeding help you to put people first, not things?
- The B.C. Ministry of Health publishes a book that lists seven advantages of breastfeeding. What do you think are the seven most important advantages? Put all suggestions on a chart, then have mothers vote to determine seven. To compare your list with that of the Ministry, see Appendix A.

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- How do you cope with housework while putting the needs of the family first?
- How has becoming a family improved your lifestyle?
- Read this quote:
Did you know it is a documented fact that no one has ever died from dirty windows or suffered psychological impairment as a result of refrigerator-top clutter? In our home our philosophy has always been PEOPLE before THINGS and THINGS THAT MATTER before THINGS THAT DON'T.
-- Karen Burdette in “Tennessee Love ‘N’ Care
(November-December, 1980)
How did you put people first in planning your birth? ... in the first weeks after birth?
- How can you involve your family in setting priorities?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- How can an attitude of “people before things” help prevent breastfeeding problems?
- List on a poster the things a new mother needs to do each day. What is the most popular? What comes next? etc.
- Do you have any suggestions for how to keep priorities in order?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- How do you manage your kitchen while meeting the other needs of your family?
- Which part of a meal is most important to you? ... to the other members of your family?
- How does a baby show that he is outgrowing the need to nurse?
- Why might a mother choose to stop nursing before her baby shows the signs of readiness? How can she ease the transition?

NEW LIFE – NEW START

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- With any new experience there is a period of learning. What have you learned about breastfeeding that would make you want to do it (again)?
- How does breastfeeding give your baby the best start in life?
- In what ways does breastfeeding meet the same needs that were met in the womb before birth?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- A new baby is the beginning of a family. How did your family grow to accept the newest member?
- What difference did the new baby make in the family?
- How did you and your partner change from being a couple into being a family?
- How did your childbirth experience help give your baby a good start in life?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Knowing what you know now, what would you do differently before the baby came? ...to start breastfeeding? ...to prepare your family? ...to prepare your house?
- How can your choices affect your breastfeeding experience?
- Read and discuss:
Finish each day and be done with it. You have done what you could. Some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. Tomorrow is a new day: begin it well and serenely and with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. -- Emerson

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Having a baby is an opportunity to make changes in our own diets. What changes would you like to make in your diet to set the best possible example for your children?
- You've given your baby the best start in life by breastfeeding. How do you plan to continue as the baby graduates to solid foods?
- What steps towards independence do you see in your child?
- As your baby grows out of babyhood, what exciting adventures in living is he moving into?

RAISING A BABY IN TODAY'S SOCIETY

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- How does breastfeeding help you meet your baby's needs at night?
- What does nursing allow you to do more easily in today's society?
- Has somebody from another generation commented on something that's easier or better for you than it was for her in childrearing?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Which historical/geographical context would you choose to live in? What can you do in your life today to make it more like your ideal time?
- How is your partner's role in the family different than your father's role was?
- How do the activities of your older children affect your ability to baby the baby?
- What advantages do you have over women of the past in the areas of childbirth and breastfeeding?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Does it seem that it was easier to nurse a baby 100 years ago?
- What advantages does our society offer if you run up against a problem?
- Tell us one of the ways you learned how to breastfeed.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- What snacks did you eat as a child, and how do they compare to the snacks you give your child?
- What in our society makes good nutrition more difficult/easier for you?
- Compare your diet with your parents' or grandparents' diets.
- Do you think the weaning process is easier or more difficult for your child today than it was for children a generation or two ago?

GROWING THROUGH MOTHERING

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- Have mothers complete the phrase: “The main responsibility of a mother to her baby is ...” Put answers on a poster, then discuss how breastfeeding fits in.
- How does breastfeeding help you mother your baby?
- Share a situation in which breastfeeding was an important part in meeting your baby’s needs.
- How have you grown as a mother in the last year?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Share something you did to prepare for birth or during the birth that you still feel really pleased about.
- How can you help your baby make the transition from life in the womb to the world outside?
- What was the biggest adjustment you had to make after baby arrived?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Tell something you learned about your baby that came as a surprise to you.
- What are your baby’s needs at night? How can you best meet those needs?
- Can anyone share hints for making night nursing easier?
- Share a breastfeeding problem you solved and how you grew in your mothering as a result.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- How does your eating affect you as a mother? How does your eating affect your family?
- What developmental changes happen at about six months old that might make a mother think her baby is weaning? How can a mother handle this situation?
- What are some “other mothering” techniques that can help ease the transition as breastfeeding becomes less needed.
- What have you learned about nutrition since you became pregnant? ... began nursing?

THE JOY OF MOTHERING

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- What do you like most about breastfeeding your baby?
- Let's make a list of words to describe the breastfeeding mother.
- What words can we list to describe the breastfed baby?
- How has breastfeeding made mothering more enjoyable for you?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- How would you describe bonding with your baby?
- Talk about one thing you appreciate about your body now that you didn't think about before.
- What effect has being pregnant, having a baby and breastfeeding had on your sexual attitudes? How can we share with our partners on this topic?
- How has nursing the baby expanded your relationships with other family members?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- At what point did you feel comfortable nursing?
- Talk about why you are proud of yourself for breastfeeding.
- Tell about a breastfeeding problem you overcame and how you solved it.
- Who are your "cheerleaders" when you are discouraged? Who's on your team?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- What do you enjoy most about preparing meals for your family?
- What have you done to make food preparation (buying, cooking, clean-up) easier for yourself?
- How did/do you feel about introducing solids to your baby?
- What things are you looking forward to seeing your baby do?

FATHERS: OUR GREATEST RESOURCE AND SUPPORT

Meeting #1: The Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- How is breastfeeding an advantage to fathers?
- How does breastfeeding help a baby bond with his father?
- What advantages of breastfeeding have you discussed, or would you like to discuss, with the father of your baby?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- How can you, as a mother, include the baby's father and make him feel as needed as he really is during pregnancy and childbirth?
- How did your partner help plan your baby's birth?
- How did your partner help, or how do you hope he will help, after the baby is born?
- Each mother brings a picture of the baby's father interacting with their children. Make a poster to display at future meetings #2.

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Did anyone have a breastfeeding problem that the baby's father helped her solve, or in which her partner supported her?
- How did your partner help you breastfeed?
- Read a story from NEW BEGINNINGS that illustrates how a father helped support the breastfeeding relationship.
- When you sit down to breastfeed, how can you include your partner?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- What is one thing about your family's nutrition you would like to talk over with your partner?
- How does your partner help with meal planning, food preparation or clean up?
- As the baby loses interest in breastfeeding, how does the father's role change?
- Have you discussed your feelings about breastfeeding and weaning with your partner? Do you agree?

HELPING HANDS

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding

- Let's pretend that I'm a friend phoning to tell you I'm pregnant. How might you encourage me to breastfeed?
- What is one thing breastfeeding has taught you?
- How does breastfeeding "free your hands?"

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Who was most helpful to you in planning your birth?
- What was the most thoughtful thing someone did to help you out when your baby was new?
- Who are the people in your life who provided the emotional support you needed when you were at home with your new baby?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Who taught you how to breastfeed your baby?
- What is one piece of advice you would give someone else who is going to nurse?
- If you had a problem with breastfeeding, who helped you solve it and how?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- How do you handle people who give your child food you don't approve of?
- Did you get any help with meal preparation when your baby was tiny?
- How can your partner and older children help with meal preparation and food selection?
- As your child outgrows the need to nurse, how can you help him to meet his needs in other ways?

COMMUNICATION

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- How has breastfeeding made communication easier between you and your baby?
- If you had to write an essay on the advantages of breastfeeding, what would you include?
- Have you talked with anyone about why you want to breastfeed? Who? What did you say?
- What word or phrase best describes how you're feeling about breastfeeding right this minute?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- What are some of the things you talked over, or wished you talked over, with your doctor before the baby came? ... with your husband?
- Who was the most helpful person to you when you had your baby? How did you show your appreciation?
- What was the best piece of advice someone gave you for the early weeks?
- Talk briefly about *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman. What love language does your partner speak? How does your partner communicate love to the baby?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Is there a cue or signal that your baby (or your body) gives you when it's time to nurse?
- Make a chart of breastfeeding problems from suggestions by the mothers. Then discuss how "communication" can solve the problems.
- What advice, written or verbal, helped you avoid a problem with breastfeeding?
- What is the most supportive thing someone said to you when you were feeling overwhelmed or discouraged?
- Make a chart with two columns: negative and positive. Ask mothers to supply phrases that sound negative, and then brainstorm different, positive ways to describe them. For instance, if a mother says she was told she was "spoiling the baby," someone might suggest she was actually "meeting the baby's needs."

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Who decides what your family eats? How can you incorporate the tastes of each family member into your diet?
- Do you or your toddler have a special word for breastfeeding?
- As your baby has grown older, what are the signs you look for to know he needs more than breastmilk?
- With whom have you discussed weaning? How did it come up? What did you say?

THE WRITTEN WORD

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- Hand out page and paragraph numbers from THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING. Pass around the book, take turns reading the quotes and discussing the advantages.
- Provide magazines and have the mothers cut out ads and headlines that suggest the advantages of breastfeeding. Make a poster.
- Have mothers share what they read in pregnancy that convinced them to breastfeed.
- Read a story from NEW BEGINNINGS illustrating a breastfeeding advantage. Discuss.

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Compare quotes from old baby care books with popular modern ones and THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING on such topics as crying, night waking, management of breastfeeding, etc.
- What books can you share with the baby's father to help prepare him for the baby?
- What books help older siblings adjust to the new baby?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Pass around LLL leaflets that deal with special situations. Let the mothers choose the ones that interest them and discuss.
- Read a story from NEW BEGINNINGS illustrating a breastfeeding problem and solution. Discuss.
- Have mothers share how THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING or another source helped them breastfeed or overcome a breastfeeding problem.
- Have mothers list on a poster breastfeeding problems or questions they have and use THE WOMANLY ART OF BREASTFEEDING to find the answers.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Have mothers fill in a poster with the columns "who, what, when, where and how" of starting solids.
- Share quotes from WHOLE FOODS OFR THE WHOLE FAMILY and discuss.
- Read "I Love Coffee" (see Appendix C) and discuss.

VISUAL AIDS: WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- The best visual aid at a meeting is a happy nursing baby. What advantages of breastfeeding can you see when you look at a breastfed baby?
- Make a poster with the letters B-R-E-A-S-T-F-E-E-D-I-N-G down the side and three columns. Label two columns “mother” and “baby,” leave the third column blank. Mothers suggest advantages for both mother and baby, beginning with each letter of “breastfeeding” Save this poster for use in meeting #4.
- Prepare cards with pictures of babies and write in “word balloons” what the babies have to say about the advantages of breastfeeding. (See Appendix E.) Mothers read the cards and discuss.

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Prepare a travel poster for a six-week holiday at home. Have each mother suggest an idea to prepare for such a holiday and write it on the poster. (e.g. “No Dishwashing!” – paper plates provided. Meals in a Minute! – frozen, ready-to-go casseroles).
- Prepare a suitcase for the hospital. Each mother suggests an item to go in it and writes it on a card. The cards are then “packed” into the suitcase.
- Display books that can help a family prepare for the birth of a baby. Each mother chooses a book and then shares how she used the book (or how she would use it) to help the family understand or prepare for the baby.

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Make cards with one letter of the word BREASTFEEDING on each card. On the back of each card write a “how-to” hint that begins with that letter, and an appropriate magazine picture. (See Appendix F.) Mothers read their cards and the Group discusses.
- Prepare a diaper bag or basket with items or pictures of items that can cause breastfeeding problems: clock, nipple shield, bottle, soother, breast pump, list of social activities too long for a new mother, milk carton (colic), and a picture of a fancy, isolated nursery. Each mother chooses an item and discusses.
- Use a partially inflated balloon and, using your hand, demonstrate how a baby “mouths” the breast while sucking. Discuss proper positioning.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Give each mother a spoon. Pass around jars of commercial baby food without the labels. Then pass around the same food freshly prepared and puréed. Mothers try to guess what it is and compare the two. Finally, pass around the labels.
- Bring a grocery bag full of “whole foods” (e.g. fruits, vegetables, whole-grain bread). As mothers remove a food from the bag, talk about when and how they might introduce this food to a baby.
- Using the poster from meeting #1, fill in column three with advantages to toddlers.
- Pass around samples of bran, wheat germ, molasses, etc. Mothers identify them and group discusses how to use them.

DECISIONS

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- Why did you decide to breastfeed? Think back on your moment of decision. When was it, and why did you decide to nurse?
- When you ran into a breastfeeding problem, what kept you going?
- Tonight we may sound overzealous about breastfeeding. Please bear with us. The media gives you plenty of positive information about bottle-feeding. We are here to give you the other side of the coin, the advantages of breastfeeding, so you can make an informed decision.
- What has society come up with to try to imitate breastfeeding? Are they successful?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- What decisions did you have to make about your baby's birth?
- What would you do differently in preparing for childbirth next time?
- Before the baby's birth, how did you prepare for the birth experience? ... your house? ... your husband? ... your older children?
- How has your husband chosen ways to interact with the baby?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- How did you prepare for breastfeeding? What else would you do the next time to be even better prepared?
- How did you decide what to do when you had a breastfeeding problem?
- Did anyone run into a problem in which they had to decide whether or not to continue breastfeeding? Please share.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Before baby was born, how long did you plan to keep baby in a crib? ... use a high chair? ... use a stroller? ... nurse? ... introduce solids?
- How have you made these decisions after baby arrived?
- What criteria do you use to buy foods?
- How can we cut food costs without sacrificing quality?

ALTERNATIVES

Meeting #1: The Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- Why did you choose to breastfeed?
- How does breastfeeding help you live your chosen lifestyle?
- At what point in your breastfeeding relationship were you faced with alternatives? Why did you decide to keep breastfeeding?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Who had an “ideal” birth/first breastfeeding experience? Share one thing that helped make your experience good.
- How many had a less-than-perfect beginning that turned out in the end? Share one thing that made your experience better.
- What would you do to prepare for a six-week holiday at home? How would you enlist the help of your family?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- The Leader makes a chart of problems suggested by the Group, then fill in columns of “preventions” and “cures.”
- Share a breastfeeding problem you solved. What were the choices? Why did you continue to nurse?
- What are some of the choices a new mother faces? How can the right decisions prevent breastfeeding difficulties?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Make a poster of a shopping list. Have the Group suggest ways it might be improved by substituting or adding superior foods.
- Do the same with a family’s daily menu.
- Ask mothers to compare a typical meal in their childhood with a typical meal they prepare now.
- Share an idea you tried or heard about using a whole grain for breakfast.
- What are some alternatives to: crib, high chair, soother, relief bottle, packaged baby food, weaning to a bottle?

CHALLENGES

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- Has anyone had a medical situation in which breastfeeding proved beneficial?
- How does breastfeeding help you meet the challenge of caring for a new baby?
- How has breastfeeding helped you meet other challenges in your life?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- We plan for the ideal birth, but it doesn't always work out in every detail. Share one thing you didn't like or that didn't go well, and tell how you would go about changing it for next time.
- How can we meet the challenge of easing our baby's transition to life outside of the mother?
- How did your family respond to the challenge of a new baby?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Make a poster of six "Breastfeeding Challenges": 1) supply and demand; 2) frequency periods and plateaus; 3) maternal self-care; 4) support; 5) meeting your baby's needs. Mothers share problems they solved and try to relate to one of the challenges listed.
- Do you have any hints for making night nursing easier?
- What situation did you encounter that was the greatest challenge to breastfeeding? How did you resolve it?
- Prepare cards of the troubles "Calamity Jane" is facing. (See Appendix G). Mothers read cards aloud and the Group discusses them.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Complete this sentence: "Just the other day, I was so glad I was nursing, because..."
- How has your nursing experience changed over time? In what way is breastfeeding less challenging than it was previously?
- Read ingredients lists from labels and have mothers guess what the products are.
- What is your greatest challenge in preparing food for your family?

CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS OF BREASTFEEDING

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding

- How have you dealt with other people's comments about perceived disadvantages of breastfeeding (such as "breastfeeding ties you down")?
- What are the advantages of breastfeeding in our modern, fast-paced world?
- We often hear about the advantages of breastfeeding for babies, but how does breastfeeding help women? Is breastfeeding "just" an infant health issue, or is it a women's issue, too?
- How does breastfeeding contribute to healthier communities and a healthy planet?

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Fathers may worry that they are "missing out" by not feeding their babies. How else can other family members bond with the baby?
- In the past, women had female family members to help them learn about mothering and breastfeeding. Many of us don't have extended families, or we have had disappointing experiences in our childhood. How can mothers learn to trust themselves and learn about mothering?
- If you and your partner come from different backgrounds, you may have different expectations about breastfeeding and parenting. How would you discuss this?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- How do cultural expectations make it more difficult to breastfeed?
- Where do you turn for help and support in overcoming difficulties?
- Sometimes it seems like we have too many sources of information -- lots of people giving lots of advice in books and on the internet. How do you know whom and what to believe?

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- At what age have others expressed surprise that you are "still" nursing?
- How do you handle the pressure to wean?
- Our supermarkets are filled with convenience foods and other foods that are heavily refined. How do you feed your family healthier alternatives?
- If your children are a little older, how do you deal with attempts by others to give them foods you don't approve of?

MOTHERING TODAY: THE SAME, YET DIFFERENT

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- How does breastfeeding fit into your lifestyle?
- What advantages of breastfeeding are important to you today, which were perhaps less important a generation ago?
- Which advantages of breastfeeding were more important a generation ago?
- Hand out cards with “reasons for not nursing.” (see Appendix D) Each mother reads her card aloud and the Group discusses it.

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Though our culture may undergo some drastic changes, babies’ needs remain the same. What are the needs of the newborn?
- How are you better able to meet your newborn’s needs than your mother or your grandmother were?
- Doctors used to say parents should wait six weeks or longer after birth before resuming sexual relations. This is no longer standard advice. Do you think giving birth and breastfeeding affect a woman’s sexual relationship?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- What breastfeeding/mothering tips have your mother, aunt, mother-in-law, etc., given to you which were helpful?
- What suggestions have they had which are outdated?
- Compare how you learned to breastfeed with how your grandmother and mother learned to breastfeed.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- What is something you used to buy already prepared that you now make yourself? Conversely, is there a convenience food you buy that your mother or grandmother used to make from scratch?
- Do you find people from older generations to be more or less supportive of extended breastfeeding?
- How do you cope with pressure to wean? Do you think your mother or grandmother had the same pressure?

AROUND THE WORLD

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- Why is breastfeeding particularly important when you travel? When you go on a short trip? Abroad?
- Read aloud from the LLLI frequently asked questions (Appendix H) that discusses the benefits of nursing while traveling.
- Pretend you were stuck in an airport in a developing country for several hours. Why might you be glad you were breastfeeding?
- Ask a mother from another country or one who has visited another country with a small baby to share her experiences.

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- How does a typical North American birth experience differ from birth in other countries? How is it the same?
- Are there any special traditions in your family surrounding childbirth or a new baby?
- What practices have various cultures developed to care for the new mother in the weeks after birth?
- How does breastfeeding connect you with other women around the world?

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Compare the resources available to North American women when they have breastfeeding problems with the resources available to women in other countries.
- Share a breastfeeding problem you encountered and how you solved it. If you had been traveling, how would you have solved it?
- Read and discuss: “Call La Leche League! Roger! Over!” (See Appendix B.)

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- Discuss ethnic background as it relates to attitudes toward food.
- What might a baby’s first solid food be in Canada? Mexico? Ghana? Poland? Japan?
- Invite a mother to present a book review of *How Weaning Happens*, by Diane Bengson and discuss how women in other cultures feel about weaning.
- Show pictures of mothers nursing babies in other countries. How old are the “babies?”

IS PARENTING ALL FUN AND GAMES?

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

- What is the most fun about breastfeeding?
- Each mother writes down one advantage of breastfeeding that begins with each letter of the word BREASTFEEDING. Compare answers and score as follows: the number of points awarded for each answer equals the number of people with that answer. Blank answers receive points equal to the number of players plus one. Low score wins.
- Each mother draws a picture to illustrate an advantage of breastfeeding. The Leader collects the pictures and holds each one up while the mothers try to guess the advantage illustrated.

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

- Give one mother a card to read aloud with a question a pregnant or new mother might ask her doctor. Give several other mothers cards with possible answers. Mother then “shops” around, asking each “doctor” her question.
- Where is the most interesting/unusual place you have nursed your baby, or the most interesting thing you’ve done while nursing?
- Have each woman read a paragraph from a children’s book in the Group Library. Discuss how older children can interact with the baby.
- What is a special game your husband plays with your baby/child?
- Compare the games you can play with an infant, a toddler and a three-year-old.

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

- Give one mother a card to read aloud with a question a new mother might ask (e.g., “How long should I nurse at each feeding?”) Give several other mothers cards with possible answers from: a doctor; a nurse; a hospital roommate; a hospital cleaning person; a visitor; etc. Read aloud.
- Was there ever a time when breastfeeding was not enjoyable for you? How did you turn the situation around?
- *Breastfeeding Concentration.* Display items on a tray, and explain that these are things that could cause breastfeeding problems (e.g., clock, nipple shield, bottle, soother, breast pump, agenda, party invitations, etc.). Allow the mothers one minute to view the tray before you cover it, and then ask them to write down as many items as they can remember. Score as follows: one point for each item remembered, one point for knowing what problem it causes, five points for knowing a solution. High score wins.

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

- How can you make nutritious meals fun and enjoyable for the whole family?
- When you’re preparing meals, what toys and games does your baby enjoy?
- Ask each mother to bring a nutritious toddler snack to the meeting to share. Discuss.
- Compare the nursing “styles” of a newborn, a six-month-old and a twelve-month-old.

DEAR LUCY LOGO...

Meeting #1: Advantages of Breastfeeding to Mother and Baby

Dear Lucy Logo...

- I'm still undecided about breastfeeding my baby. I was bottle-fed myself and I've heard that formula contains everything a baby needs, so why bother? My friends all bottle-feed and they've warned me that if I breastfeed I'll be tied to the house and turn into a frump. I don't want that!" – Modern Millie
- I'm sure breastfeeding is best for baby for those who can do it! But no one in my family – mom, mother-in-law, or sister – has been able to and I have my doubts about me. My breasts are pretty small, almost non-existent before I became pregnant. How could I possibly have enough milk? Is there any hope for me? – Hopeless Heather
- I'm planning to go back to work after my baby arrives. Other women I know gave their babies occasional bottles right away. If I did this, my baby could get used to the bottle while I was on maternity leave. I know that some mothers continue to nurse when they work outside their homes and I've thought about it, but it sounds like too much work. Would it be worth it? Are there any advantages for a working mother? – Working Wilma
- My husband and I are planning a vacation trip about two months after our baby is born. Will that make any difference to my plans to breastfeed? Will I be able to continue breastfeeding when I get back? – Traveling Trudy
- I've heard mothers talk about how breastfeeding helps them learn to be better mothers. I don't see what difference a feeding method would make. How could it?" – Curious Cathy

Meeting #2: Baby Arrives: The Family and the Breastfed Baby

Dear Lucy Logo:

- I read somewhere that the basic care of a newborn takes at least eight hours a day! My sister says not to plan on doing much other than baby care for the first while. How do women cope? Especially with other children? After all, there's still cooking, laundry, dusting, shopping, and such to be done. Not to mention entertaining friends and volunteer work. Any tips? – Busy Brenda
- I'm having mixed feelings about the "rooming in" policy at the hospital. Some friends tell me I should have someone stay with me to look after my baby as much as possible, so I can get all the rest I can. I know I'll need it when my husband goes back to work! Others tell me to nurse the baby as often as possible, and to keep him with me day and night. I admit I'm really looking forward to having my baby, but how will I get my rest? Does feeding night and day make any difference to my baby? Will it make any difference to me? – Debating Debbie
- Since our baby was born I feel left out, like a fifth wheel. It may sound childish but I think I'm jealous. With my wife tending to every need of the baby all day there's not much left for me! She falls asleep the minute the baby does at night. It

seems since we've started being parents we've stopped being a couple. –

Desperate Dad

- I'm enjoying my new baby but my two-year-old is driving me crazy! The minute I sit down to nurse, he gets into mischief: He drew on the toilet with my best lipstick; he dissolved nearly a whole roll of toilet paper plus a box of laundry detergent in the sink; he discovered the joy of spreading newspapers wall-to-wall and then set up a bookstore by removing ALL our books from the shelves and spreading them around. Sometimes I'd like to give him away! Is it normal to feel this way? – Overwhelmed Olga
- I'm still breastfeeding my two-year-old, and I just found out I'm pregnant again! I'm really excited, but I don't know whether I want to keep breastfeeding or not. Is it really possible to nurse through pregnancy? How will my toddler feel once the baby is born? -- Pregnant Pat

Meeting #3: The Art of Breastfeeding and Overcoming Difficulties

Dear Lucy Logo...

- I'm planning to breastfeed my baby, but I'm kind of nervous. I've never seen a mother breastfeed. I guess mothers don't nurse their babies in public. How will I know what to do? Where will I find a place to breastfeed him privately? Or will I have to stay home until my baby has weaned? When should I first nurse him? And where? And how? – Anxious Annie
- I'm exhausted! My three-month-old still isn't sleeping through the night! I'm up at two and at four and at six and permanently at eight. My book says to make sure baby gets a good feeding at night by making sure he's really awake for it. So I turn on the light, take him out of his crib, change him, feed him, burp him and feed him again in our rocking chair. He usually drifts off to sleep, but as soon as I try to lay him down he wakes up again! I've tried everything: mobiles, music boxes, recordings of womb sounds. HELP! – Somnambulist Sue
- Our baby is due in five weeks. We've bought all the equipment and stocked up on diapers and little clothes. But what do I need to get ready to breastfeed? Will I need to buy anything special to help with that? My friend says I should buy a pump. What do you suggest? – Ready Rita
- I know breastfeeding isn't supposed to hurt, but I've had pain off and on since my baby was born. Everyone says his latch is really good, so I don't know what's going on. What else might be going on? -- Sore Sandy

Meeting #4: Nutrition and Weaning

Dear Lucy Logo...

- My husband is out of work, so the budget is pretty tight. I still want to feed my family as nutritiously as possible. Any suggestions? – Healthy Hannah
- I'm pregnant and my doctor says I should only gain twenty-four pounds. I'm only seven months and I've already gained twenty-three! What should I do? -- Hungry Helga

- My baby is four months old and my mom is really pressuring me to start him on baby cereal and strained fruit. She says I was eating everything by this age. She says I have to get him used to the spoon. What do you say? – Muddled Mary.
- My husband and I decided that he would take part of my parenting leave, so I'll be going back to work when our baby is about five months old. My husband wants to give the baby a bottle, but I'm wondering if it is better to start solid foods a bit early instead. And the sitter I'll have when my husband goes back to work wants me to wean him completely. I feel pressured enough thinking about work. How do I decide what's best? – Working Wanda
- My daughter is still nursing her eighteen-month-old. I've been very proud of her up till now, but I think it's time to wean! He eats lots of food so he doesn't need to nurse. I'm afraid that nursing is taking too much out of her, and besides, I don't want my grandson to be a "mama's boy." What advice can I give her? – Grandma
- My husband and I waited a long time before we started our family, and I want to have more than one child. Jason's eighteen months old and I've been trying for over a year to get pregnant. I'm worried about waiting too long. Should I wean him completely so I can get pregnant? -- Eager Eva

HOLIDAYS ARE SPECIAL:
A FEW ADDITIONAL IDEAS FOR MEETINGS
THAT FALL AT SPECIAL TIMES OF THE YEAR

January Meetings: Happy New Year!

- **Any meeting:** What is your New Year's resolution for your family?

February Meetings: Valentine's Day

- **Meeting #3:** Make a large poster using magazine pictures of mothers, fathers, babies and children in red hearts. Ask each mother to write a favourite quote from an LLL book under a picture.
- **Any Meeting:** Serve heart-shaped raspberry finger gelatins for refreshments.

Summer Meetings: Travel

- **Meeting #1:** What are the special advantages of breastfeeding while traveling?
- **Meeting #2:** What special opportunities for interacting with the baby does summertime afford for the rest of the family?
- **Meeting #3:** Does summertime cause any special problems for the breastfed baby or mother? For example, should the baby have water supplements?
- **Meeting #4:** What could we plan for a summer barbecue to make it more nutritious? Any substitutes for toasted marshmallows?

October Meetings: Hallowe'en

- **Meeting #3:** What are some Hallowe'en traditions you would like to continue with your family? What new traditions would you like to start?
- **Meeting #4:** What are some alternatives to candy for Hallowe'en treats?

November / December Meetings: Christmas, Hanukkah and Other Holidays

- **Meeting #1:** What special advantages does breastfeeding afford the mother at holiday time? Can you tell us about a special time over the holiday season when you were very glad to be nursing?
- **Meeting #2:** Does your family celebrate a holiday during the winter? What traditions do your family members feel are important at Christmas, Hanukkah, or other holidays you celebrate? How does your family make the holiday season special for everyone? How can we simplify holiday preparations so we enjoy the season too?
- **Meeting #3:** Why are Leaders swamped with "breast infection" phone calls at this time of year?
- **Meeting #4:** How can we improve our nutrition, yet still meet the expectations for holiday "goodies?"
- **Any Meeting:** How has being pregnant or having a baby changed your attitude to holidays?

Appendix A

Public Health's Seven Reasons for Nursing (Baby's Best Chance, BC Ministry of Health)

1. Convenience (readily available and germ-free)
2. Right temperature
3. Easier to digest
4. Fewer digestive upsets, infections, allergies
5. Good development of teeth, jaw and palate
6. Involution of uterus
7. Intimate contact helps to build a secure and loving relationship (Bonding)

Appendix B

“Call La Leche League! Roger! Over!” Carolyn Thomas, Ripples III-2-7 (former BC/Y newsletter)

This morning I set what must be an LLL record for long distance telephone helping: a radio call from a sailboat near Borneo, some 11,800 km from Victoria! This call came from a friend's sister who, along with her husband and four-month-old daughter, has been sailing around the Pacific and Indonesia in a boat that they built themselves. The adventure included a shipboard pregnancy and the birth of their daughter in Medang on the Solomon Islands.

A radio call is an interesting experience. A local HAM radio operator “patched” the call through to my telephone at about six a.m. (the middle of the night their time!) and the conversation seemed oddly interrupted by all the “over”s and “roger”s necessary to prevent both parties from talking at the same time.

The nursing problem started three weeks earlier during a period of difficult passages on the boat, when the mother was very tired and busy around the clock. She began to notice a problem with her letdown and was becoming concerned about changes in the baby, both physical and emotional. Was she losing her milk? You can imagine how anxious you might feel in a similar situation: thousands of kilometers from home, feeling frantic because you had expected nursing to get less complicated as time went by, and without any means on board to supply any alternatives. Although the mother had a copy of the “Manual” (*The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*), she felt desperate for some personal reassurance and decided to call LLL.

After our twenty minute conversation, she seemed more at ease and promised to let me know how things were progressing when they next put ashore in Bali in two weeks, at which time they plan to take the baby to a medical clinic for her checkup and do lots of resting and relaxing for a change.

This call gave me a real boost. What a wonderful example of the far-reaching benefits of mother-to-mother contact, even from the other side of the globe!

Appendix C

I Love Coffee

Dee Kohl, *Conn-Tact*, Fall, 1977

I love coffee. The best times of my day revolve around my coffee cup. One day I was told I had to cut down on my coffee drinking. I just can't understand the reason. My coffee pot with its hot, delicious coffee, was taken from the counter and shut inside one of my kitchen cabinets. Twice a day I'm allowed to open the cabinet and pour myself a small cup. It's awful to pass by that cabinet a hundred times a day, smelling the coffee, knowing I am only able to open that door twice. Sometimes I wonder if I'm crabby simply because I can't open that door and pour myself just one, little extra, delicious cup – not even one! Oh, why can't I have my coffee back?

Do you suppose our little nursing people sometimes feel like that?

Appendix D

Reasons for Not Breastfeeding

- My mother couldn't breastfeed, so I guess I can't.
- I have (diabetes, epilepsy, etc.) and I don't think I can breastfeed because I have to take medication.
- I couldn't put up with all the pain and messiness – sore nipples, leaking, breast infections.
- I've heard breastmilk is full of environmental contaminants. I don't want my baby to have those!
- If I breastfeed, I'll have to get up at night. If I don't, my husband can get up with the baby.
- We don't have much money and I don't think I can afford nursing bras, breast pads, and extra food for myself.
- My other children will be jealous if I breastfeed. I didn't nurse them and I don't want to be unfair.
- I've heard breastfed babies eat all the time. I couldn't put up with that.
- This is my husband's baby too and he'd feel terribly left out if he couldn't feed the baby.
- Breastfeeding ties you down. I wouldn't be able to go out and I'd be at the baby's beck and call.
- I can't give up chocolate, and I know I can't eat it if I breastfeed.
- There are allergies in my family and I don't want to pass them on to my baby through my breastmilk.
- I don't want to breastfeed because I don't want to lose my figure.
- My breasts aren't big enough. I know I couldn't make enough milk.

Appendix E

Babies Tell It Like It Is

- Doesn't my mommy look nice! Breastfeeding helped her get back in shape after I was born.
- Mommy says nursing me always makes her feel more loving towards the whole family.
- Our trip was wonderful and Mommy never had to worry about a clean place to fix my food. Breastmilk is always fresh and at the right temperature.
- I could count on all of my mommy's attention when I was tiny because breastfeeding helps space babies.
- It's true! My mommy is less likely to develop breast cancer because she's breastfeeding me.
- Daddy's so funny! He and Mommy have more time to play with me because they don't have to fix my food. Breastmilk is always ready.
- My dog makes special milk for her puppies and my mommy makes special milk for me. Each mammal makes milk just right for her babies.
- Breastfed babies smell better. Yeah, I noticed! That's because breastmilk establishes good bacteria in the gut, and because breastmilk is almost completely digested.
- The colostrums, or first milk, was especially important to me since I was premature. I'm lucky my mommy was breastfeeding me – it gave me a better start in life.
- Breastfeeding is the natural way to feed babies.
- When Mommy nurses me, I feel so loved and secure.
- You mean some babies have to wait to eat when they're hungry?!
- Breastmilk is a living tissue and cannot be duplicated.
- Aren't I pretty! Nice skin is one reason. Did you know that breastfed babies have less eczema?
- You bet I'm healthy. Breastmilk has all the nutrients I need to grow and thrive.
- Isn't this interesting? It says here that breastfeeding helps prevent allergies.
- I do believe I'm getting another tooth. Since I'm breastfed, my teeth have a better chance of coming in nice and straight.
- As long as I'm nursing, my mommy's immune system helps keep me healthy too.
- Gee, with all the money Mommy and Daddy are saving by breastfeeding, they could buy me that super rocking horse, and still have enough left over to get a dishwasher.
- My mommy and daddy say I deserve only the best. *That's* why I'm breastfed.

Appendix F

B-R-E-A-S-T-F-E-E-D-I-N-G HINTS

B: Both breasts	(picture of nursing mother and baby)
R: Relax	(mother sitting in rocker or with feet up, holding baby)
E: Enjoy your baby	(mother with laughing baby)
A: Air-dry nipples	(nude baby on beach or in bathtub)
S: Sleep with, or near, baby	(mother and sleeping baby)
T: Talk to other nursing mothers	(two or three mothers together)
F: Father can “protect” and support you	(father with baby/family)
E: Eat well	(pictures of nutritious foods)
E: Every baby sets its own schedule. Watch the baby, not the clock.	(mother and baby picture)
D: Drink plenty of fluids	(picture of nutritious drinks)
I: In the bath, avoid soap on your nipples	(mother or baby in tub)
N: No bottles or supplements	(nursing couple)
G: Get lots of rest	(sleeping baby)

Appendix G

CALAMITY JANE'S TROUBLES

- I've got my baby now, but nothing I do seems to work. How do I get him to latch on properly? What do I do when he's too sleepy to take the breast? How can I break the latch if he doesn't want to let go when his time is up?
- I'm so confused! How often am I supposed to nurse this baby? Do I have to wake him up at night?
- My milk must have come in overnight. My breasts are so hard and sore. What do I do?
- I've heard of a letdown reflex, but what is it? How can I tell if I'm having it? Will it hurt?
- Every time I nurse my baby, the other breast sprays milk everywhere. At first it was funny, but now it's embarrassing. What can I do about it?
- Sometimes my baby's bowel movements are very runny. Does he have diarrhea? Is he reacting to something in my diet?
- At the hospital they weighed my baby every day. Now that I'm home, how do I know he's getting enough? Should I buy a scale?
- I've been nursing for a couple of months now and all of a sudden my breasts aren't hard anymore. They don't feel full. Am I losing my milk?
- One of my nipples is very sore. The other is bleeding. Whenever the baby latches on it hurts so much!
- I thought I had the "flu" but the doctor says it's a breast infection. He gave me some medicine and said I have to stop nursing on that side.
- What should I wear? We've been invited to a wedding and I know my baby will need to nurse.
- My relatives all say they'll take care of my baby so that my husband and I can have a night out together. I'd sure like a break, but I hate to leave the baby.
- I have a horrible cold. Will it make the baby sick if I nurse him?
- I've had a Caesarean section and I'm not so sure about nursing. I guess after missing out on the birth I wanted and hoped for, I don't want to fail at something else too.
- My mother tells me I'm spoiling my baby because I pick him up when he cries. It makes me uncomfortable to hear him cry, but maybe my mother is right. After all, she raised four kids.
- I'm going to work soon. Can I continue breastfeeding?
- I'm so tired when I go to bed that when my husband wants to make love I don't feel like it. Having this baby, we seem to be growing apart. I guess we're both preoccupied with the changes in our lives.

APPENDIX H

Frequently Asked Questions Are There Any Tricks to Travel with a Breastfed Baby?

It's much easier to travel with a breastfed baby than a bottle-fed one. A breastfeeding mother doesn't need to worry about packing bottles and formula or sterilizing all the feeding supplies. Your milk is always ready and always at the right temperature, and the comfort of nursing can help reduce the stress of being in unfamiliar places.

On an airplane, try to nurse the baby during takeoffs and landings to help ease the pressure in his/her ears. Take an extra set of clothes for you and the baby in your carry-on bag in case your luggage is delayed (or the baby's diaper leaks onto your lap). Wear a loose-fitting top you can easily pull up for nursing. A light blanket can help give you privacy in tight quarters. Air travel can be dehydrating, so make sure you drink plenty of water and/or juice. Note that safety experts recommend that the child should stay restrained in his or her seat to avoid injury, just as adult passengers are required. They also contend that it's just as important to properly restrain your child in a plane as it is in a car. Many mothers find that it is possible to breastfeed their baby in a car seat while remaining buckled in themselves.

On a long car trip, be sure to allow extra time for breastfeeding stops. It's unsafe (and illegal in most places) to travel with the baby in your arms. If your baby needs to be held, stop the car and take a break. If your baby sleeps well in the car, consider driving at night or during nap times.

Even the most enjoyable traveling can be tiring with a baby. Try to leave plenty of time in your schedule for relaxing and unwinding. Pay careful attention to your own needs for nutritious food, plenty of liquids, and rest. Watch carefully to see that your baby is not overtired from too much handling or stimulation. He or she may want to nurse more than usual. It's not unusual for a baby's schedule to change when you're away from home.

Depending on your baby's age, bring along a few familiar toys as well as some new ones to entertain him/her. Some babies sleep better in strange places if you bring sheets and/or blankets from home (they'll smell and feel right to the baby). If you will be visiting friends or relatives who aren't supportive of breastfeeding, try some role-playing ahead of time to help you deal with criticism. (Look for more suggestions in the FAQ about ["Dealing with Criticism about Breastfeeding."](#))