OVERVIEW

Educating mothers is an individual-level strategy to provide educational information and resources about breastfeeding to new or expectant mothers. The goals are to increase new mothers’ breastfeeding knowledge and skills and to influence their attitudes toward breastfeeding. Breastfeeding education occurs most often during the prenatal and intrapartum periods and should be taught by someone with expertise or training in lactation management. This instruction typically occurs within an informally structured small group setting but may be given one-on-one. Although the target audience is usually pregnant or breastfeeding women, it may include fathers and others who support the breastfeeding mother.

Supported by:

- CDC’s Guide to Breastfeeding Interventions
- IOM’s Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies

Setting:
Health Care, Community

EXAMPLES

Infant feeding classes taught at a hospital. Classes include an overview of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) guidelines, indications for alternate feeding methods, and education on the three feeding phases during the first year of life.

A program for low-income, African-American women using a prenatal clinic included classes addressing the decision to breastfeed, common breastfeeding myths, benefits of breastfeeding, basic skills in breastfeeding, and breastfeeding demonstrations from past class participants. Participants also received a one-time individual lactation counseling session during the postpartum period.

A community program targeting Asian women seeking family planning care included 12 weekly sessions led by trained professionals covering breastfeeding and other topics related to pregnancy. Participants also received printed materials on breastfeeding.

Health insurance plans can provide breastfeeding education for their members, such as a lactation support program to its members. As part of this program, enrollees who are pregnant can take a prenatal breastfeeding class at no charge.

A state government organization provides a variety of training programs for persons who will provide breastfeeding education to mothers. All training classes provide continuing education credit.
**TRT REVIEWED INTERVENTIONS**

- Connecticut Breastfeeding Initiative
- Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative for hospitals and birth centers

**RESOURCES AND TOOLS**

**COMMUNITY**

- **An Easy Guide to Breastfeeding** (Department of Health and Human Services)
  This publication provides information on the benefits of breastfeeding for baby, mother and society, and provides frequently asked questions and answers about breastfeeding. This guide is offered in Spanish, Chinese, English, and in specific English versions for African American and Native American/Alaska Native women.

- **Breastfeeding and Baby-led Weaning DVD Clips** (Mark-It Television)
  Filmed in a breastfeeding clinic in Oxford, these downloadable DVD clips help mothers practice breastfeeding by providing a model for the new mother to watch. Women who have had little contact with breastfeeding previously can have an easier learning process after watching what to do and what to avoid.

- **Breastfeeding Fact Sheets** (Public Health- Seattle and King County)

**REFERENCES**
