

Observing a breastfeed

The aim of this exercise is to facilitate accurate, close observation of a chest/breastfeed, as a learning exercise on positioning and attachment and hand expression prior to undertaking clinical practice.

You should aim to observe a complete chest/breastfeed, from before the start of the feed until after it is concluded.

Baby's Age: _____

Location/situation of observation: _____

Beginning of the Feed

1. Describe the appearance of the nipple(s) and areola(e) before the start of the feed. (Note particularly the shape of the nipple and areola and whether the nipple is centrally positioned).

2. How does the nursing parent hold their baby to bring them to the breast?

3. How does she encourage the baby to turn towards the breast?
Is it by turning: their head or their body towards themselves?

4. Describe what the baby does when approaching the breast.

What do you notice about:

The baby's arms and hands?:

The angle of the baby's head?: _____

The baby's mouth?: _____

The baby's tongue?: _____

The baby's mood?: _____

During the feed

5. Describe the nursing parent's body posture. Do any areas appear tense?

6. Which parts of the body are touching the nursing parent's body (i.e. her chest/abdomen/breast)?

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chest | <input type="checkbox"/> Hips/tummy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thighs/knee | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

7. Do the baby's knees point in the same direction as her/his nose?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

If not, where is her/his body twisted?

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> At the neck | <input type="checkbox"/> At the waist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhere else | |

8. Which parts of the baby's face are touching their parent's breast during the feed?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nose | <input type="checkbox"/> Lips |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chin | |

9. Describe the appearance of the baby's:

Top lip _____

Lower lip _____

Cheeks _____

10. Is any of the mother's areola visible?

Yes

No

If so, where do you see more of it?

More by the baby's top lip

More by the bottom lip

None is visible

11. Does the baby appear to let go or pull away during the feed?

Yes

No

12. Is there any movement of the mother's breast tissue or skin during the feed?

Yes

No

If so, please describe it

13. How does the mother interact with her baby during the feed (e.g. eye contact, talking, stroking)?

14. Does the baby suck:

Constantly

In bursts

If in bursts, are the gaps between bursts short (i.e. a few seconds)

Long (15 seconds plus)

15. How would you describe the baby's sucks?

Rapid/short

Slow/long

Does the pattern change during the feed?

Yes

No

If yes, how?

End of the Feed

16. Who ends the feed?

Mother

Baby

How? _____

17. Describe the appearance of the nipple(s) and areola(e) immediately after the feed. Note particularly any changes in colour or shape.

18. How does the mother feel about the feed? Does she report any discomfort? What is her impression of how the baby experienced the feed?

19. Did you make recommendations? If so, what were they? If not, what recommendations would you like to have made?

What new insights could you apply to this feeding scenario?: