

PLENARY: PROMOTION OF EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING BY ADDRESSING
UNREALISTIC PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS ABOUT BABIES AND BREASTFEEDING

Jane Heinig

Ruth Sweet

This was a WIC project. Why do so many women begin breastfeeding and then quit so quickly? Most important was the discovery that a new baby is not as pretty, quiet, sleeping nor happy as the pregnant parents expected. They set out to find what could be done within a WIC setting and tried BABY BEHAVIOR TRAININGS.

These are 8 hour staff trainings. They didn't intend to teach parents about infant behavior states but did want the staff to understand this info, partly because it enabled them to predict the baby's next behavior when working with a family.

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/Pages/WICNEFITWIC.aspx> has many ready to use trainings. I have downloaded and printed THE SCIENCE OF ATTACHMENT which focuses on skin to skin issues. I like it a lot.

Jane described a progression of infant states and the key messages:

CRYING stressful for parents but a useful communication for babies.

IRRITABLE Babies are driven to socialize and learn, they get irritated by distractions or over stimulation

QUIET ALERT Moms find this a relaxing time for them but a baby is working hard. They try to maintain the connection with the other person.

DROWSY Some babies get irritated when drowsy. Babies give signals when they need rest.

ACTIVE SLEEP Dreaming is important, dreaming babies are easily waked.

QUIET SLEEP Babies need the deeper sleep to rest and recover.

The difference between sleep states can be obvious. Teach parents to hold baby until deep sleep is reached.

CHANGING STATES Can take 15 minutes or more, especially for very young or premie. Use position changes, touch, words, etc.

REPITITION is soothing

INFANT CUES include many needs, not just for feeding. Engagement and disengagement are not specific .