

Speaking in many tongues

How the Early Expression of the Rooting Reflex
Helps the Laid-back Mom
Facilitate the Baby-led
Breast Crawl
to Self-attachment...
Huh? What Are We Really Talking About?

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Declaration and Disclosure

I have an affiliation with one or more persons or entities that could be perceived as having a bearing on my presentation of this subject.

Affiliation

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Objectives

1. The participant will list 3 or 4 different phrases currently used by lactation professionals to describe the actions of the competent neonate instinctively searching for the breast, and list three ways that that the paradigms described by these phrases are **SIMILAR**
2. The participant will list ways the paradigms suggested by these phrases differ, and the **DIFFERENT IMPLICATIONS** each has for practice.
3. The participant will describe how each of these different paradigms fits with the biologists' description of mammalian feeding behaviors, and suggest how keeping our minds open to the contradictions inherent in these differing phrases can **HELP US KEEP LEARNING**.
4. The participant will describe the effect of the **LAG** between first new observations, research, publication, and general recommendations to families.

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What babies know

And what the rest of us
are trying to figure out

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Early perspectives

Early midwives' textbooks from centuries ago

Language: Baby sucks; Mother gives suck

No mention of

- teaching breastfeeding
- problems learning
- breast refusal

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Biologists' perspective: The mammalian feeding sequence

- Kittens, puppies
- The macaque monkey

Rosenblatt JS. Psychobiology of maternal-behavior: contribution to the clinical understanding of maternal behavior among humans. *Acta Paediatr.* 1994;83(Suppl. 397):3–8

- Rats and rabbits & humans

Raymond Nowak, Suckling, milk, and the development of preferences toward maternal cues by neonates: from early learning to filial attachment. 2006. *Adv Study Behav*, 36:1-68.

- The newborn red kangaroo (CSIRO video 1965)

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The 50's & 60's

The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding
La Leche League International

Whether you sit up or lie down while you nurse him is up to you. Whichever position you find most comfortable is best for you. Don't try to shove the nipple into his mouth. Rest his cheek against it and he'll turn his head towards it and latch on.

1958

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Meanwhile... Western Birth

- Separating mothers and babies
- Anesthesia, "twilight" morphine/scopolamine vaginal births 1915 into the 50's and 60's
- Effect on newborns: Presumption of incompetence
- However, Loboyer in France
– Birth without Violence, 1974

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Late 70's: In the journals...

Michel Odent (ahead of his time)

The early expression of the rooting reflex. *Proceedings of the 5th International Congress of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Rome 1977*. London: Academic Press, 1977: 1117-19.

Swedish researchers

Came by the week for study days with Dr. Odent

Brazelton, TB

Behavioral competence of the newborn infant. *Seminars in Perinatology*. 3(1):35-44. 1979

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The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding 3rd edition, 1981

As you and your baby get settled, talk to him or just make those little cooing noises that mothers and babies understand so well.

Next.... The baby will turn toward any pressure on his face, a reflex that you want working with you.

....So relax, and do nothing more than touch his cheek with your nipple, assuring him all the while that he will do very well at nursing, as he most certainly will.

1981

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Infant competence: The 80's

1983: Amiel-Tison C, Grenier A

Expression of liberated motor activity (LMA) following manual immobilization of the head. *Neurologic Evaluation of the Newborn and the Infant*. New York NY: Masson Publishing USA, Inc.; 1983:87-109

1985: Klaus, MH, Klaus, PH. *The Amazing Newborn*.

1987: Widström A-M, Ransjö-Arvidson AB, Christensson K, Matthiesen A-S, Winberg J, Uvnäs-Moberg K. Gastric suction in healthy newborn infants: effects on circulation and developing feeding behaviour. *Acta Paediatr Scand*. 1987;76: 566-572.

1987: Widström, A-M. Video Breastfeeding is Baby's Choice

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The information lag...

But by 1991,
What mothers were actually being taught:

- Learning to breastfeed is complicated
- Mothers have to do the whole thing because babies are incompetent

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1991: What we were teaching...

The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding

La Leche League International, 5th Edition

The following steps explain the correct way to position your baby at the breast in order to ensure that baby sucks well and gets plenty of milk and also to prevent nipple soreness and pain.

1. Position yourself properly.Sit upPillows are a must....
2. Position your baby properly.... Baby should be
3. Offer your breast to the baby. Cup your breast ...Your thumb and index finger should form a "C". Be sure your fingers are
4. Encourage baby to latch on properly.....

[There are 3 more numbered steps that cover recognizing effective sucking, dealing with pain, correcting an incorrect latch.

Descriptions of and instructions for other breastfeeding positions follow.]

90's: More research & videos about infant competence

1990:

Righard L, Alade M. Effect of delivery room routines on success of first breast-feed. *Lancet*. 1990;336:1105-1107

Associated video: Righard & Frantz, 1995. Delivery Self-Attachment
Video clips used with permission of Geddes Productions.

1994:

Harris H. Remedial co-bathing for breastfeeding difficulties. *Breastfeeding Rev*. 11:10 (Nov 1994) 465-468.

Associated video Harris, 1994, Matt & Mandy

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And more...

1999:

Meyer K, Anderson GC. Using kangaroo care in a clinical setting with fullterm infants having breastfeeding difficulties. *MCN Am J Matern Child Nurs*. 1999 Jul-Aug;24(4):190-2.

2001:

Schore AN, The effects of a secure attachment relationship on right brain development, affect regulation, and infant mental health. *Infant Ment Health J*. 2001; 22:7-66

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What we were learning, 2007-8

- Gangal, 2007, UNICEF India, video
- Colson, 2008, DVD
- Smillie, 2008, DVD

Colson SD, Meek JH, Hawdon JM. Optimal position for the release of primitive neonatal reflexes stimulation breastfeeding. *Early Hum Dev* 2008; 84(7):441-44

Smillie CM. How infants learn to feed: a neurobehavioral model. In CS Genna (ed.) *Supporting Suckling Skills in Breastfeeding Infants*. 2008: 77- 95. Boston: Jones and Bartlett (2012:83-104)

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The information lag...

And yet, in 2004,
What mothers were being taught:

- Learning to breastfeed is very complicated
- Babies are no help at all in this process

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2004 – *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, 7th edition LLLI

1. Position yourself properly.Sit up bed..... Pillows are a must....
2. Position your baby properly... Baby's ear, shoulder, and hip should be in a straight line. His head should be in line with his body...Hold the baby at the level of your nipple....
3. Offer your breast to the baby. Your thumb and index finger should form a "C" or "U." Support the breast as close to its natural height as possible while the baby latches on and throughout the feeding, with your thumb in line with the baby's nose and four fingers on the other side of the breast...
4.
5.
-
-
9.

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Recognition of infant competence

- Brazelton, *Behavioral competence of the newborn infant*, 1979
- Amiel-Tison & Grenier, *Expression of liberated motor activity (LMA) following manual immobilization of the head*.1983
- Klaus, *The Amazing newborn*, 1985
- Schore, *The effects of a secure attachment relationship on right brain development, affect regulation, and infant mental health*. 2001

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Course correction: videos

Breast crawl 2007

Biological nurturing positions, 2008

Baby-led breastfeeding, 2008

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Keys

- Karolinska researchers
 - Olfactory and other neurosensory cues
 - Hunger—physiologic drop in blood sugar
 - Thirst-vasopressin and serum osmolality
 - Undisrupted interactions
 - Satiation: CCK and oxytocin

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Keys

Infant competence—
Brazelton, Klaus
Infant state — Prechtl and Wolf
Schore, mother co-regulates infant state
Right-brained thinking
Amiel-Tison & Grenier

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Language

- Baby takes the breast; Mother gives the breast
- The mammalian feeding sequence
- Breast crawl
- Attachment, latch
- Infant self-attachment
- Baby-led latch, baby-led feeding
- Laid-back breastfeeding, biological nurturing
- Baby takes the breast

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The breast crawl, 2007

- Gangal, UNICEF India
BPNI Maharashtra
- The setting
- Why all the people?

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Interpretations: motherbaby

Geographic differences in emphasis on mother or baby or both

- Self-attachment and the “dead mother”
- Right-brained interactive dance—
 - baby-led, mother responds
 - “Mother-spied” (Weissinger & Glover) mother-led, baby responds

Mother-baby interaction vs. “Self-attachment”

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Colson: Biological Nurturing™

Midwife in the UK, her PhD thesis:

Colson SD, Meek JH, Hawdon JM. Optimal positions for the release of primitive neonatal reflexes stimulating breastfeeding, *Early Hum Dev* 2008, 84(7):441-9

- Qualitative and exploratory
- Postures and positions
 - Biological nurturing position: baby
 - Biological nurturing posture: semi-reclined
- Minimal instructions to mother

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Illustration from Colson’s paper

This first time mother has not been taught to breastfeed. Mother and baby are lightly dressed. Mimicking the ventral suspension hold used by neurologists to assess PNRs, she places her 13 day old baby on her body.

The mother has arms and hands free; her body slope contains her baby providing a safe environment. There is a pause during which the mother spontaneously triggers foot PNRs. Baby’s fingers grasp, flex, and extend.

The baby places and crawls but steps sideways; the mother brings her baby back to her own body midline. In positions of ventral suspension, chest pressure and brushing release head righting and nodding.

Colson SD, Meek JH, Hawdon JM. Optimal positions for the release of primitive neonatal reflexes stimulating breastfeeding. *Early Hum Dev* 2008, 84(7):441-9

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Colson’s Research & findings

- Identification of primitive reflexes
 - More reflexes identified in “biological nurturing” postures
- Videotaping for ‘best’ attachment, sustained painfree suckling > 1 minute
 - *slightly more than half of ‘best episodes’ in “non-biological nurturing” postures.*

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Putting Colson’s research in context

Colson in UK

- UK midwifery culture was seeing these behaviors as infant “self-attachment” with little maternal involvement (“dead mother”)
- Colson as midwife sees
 - mother as agent
 - Infant as merely driven by primitive reflexes

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Putting Colson’s research in larger context

- Laid-back mother
 - Relaxed position: oxytocin
 - Opens up lap
 - Empowered by infant competence
- Infant stability-postural and state organization
 - Gravity keeps infant in close contact
- Right-brained behaviors:
 - No need to teach mother***
- Infant competence

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The blind men and the elephant

- Who's doing what?
 - Mother?
 - Baby?
 - Both?
- Reflexes and responses
 - Simple and complex behaviors
 - Mother
 - Baby
- Mother latches baby (M)
- Self-attachment (B)
- Breast crawl (B)
- Biological nurturing™ (M)
- Mother-baby interaction: (M/B)

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Just the beginning

- The biologists
- Early midwives
- Odent, 1977
- Widström, 1987
- Rigard and Alade, 1990
- Harris, 1994
- Meyer, 1999
- Colson, 2008
- Gangal, 2008
- Brazelton
- Klaus
- Amiel-Tison & Grenier
- Glover
- Schore

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Learning from each other

- Definitions
- Contexts
- Paradigms
- Bottom line

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2010: The Womanly Art, 8th edition

Here's an approach that takes advantage of the natural instincts you both have

...just find a totally comfortable way to cuddle together so that you're completely supported – head, neck, shoulders, body – by whatever you're leaning back against, and she's completely supported by your body

...You don't need to be skilled; fumbling is a normal – even helpful! – part of the process.

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What babies *and* mothers know

And what the rest of us are trying to figure out
(As blind men and the elephant...)

Thanks

To all the mothers and babies who are teaching us.

To all of you who will keep observing and learning from the mothers and babies.

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Three take home messages

1. The language and phrases we use to describe the actions of an infant instinctively searching for the breast can influence the paradigms by which we understand that infant behavior.
2. While the language and phrases may be different, the mother and infant behaviors are not. By focusing less on the language and more on our own observations, we can keep our minds open to learning more about these hardwired behaviors and how best to harness them.
3. General recommendations to families about transitioning to breastfeeding has lagged behind the published observations of the hardwired mother and infant behaviors that facilitate learning to feed.

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