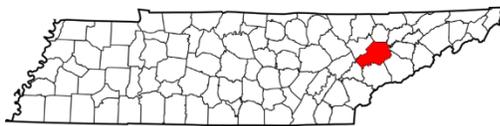


Culturally Appropriate Breastfeeding Education Materials

Former MCH Nutrition trainee Sarah Lisson, MS, MPH, RDN, LDN and former MCH Emerging Nutrition Leader trainee Cheryl Hill, MS, MPH, RDN, LDN worked with a collaborative team to promote breastfeeding equity and reduce disparities among racial and ethnic diverse populations in Knox County, Tennessee. Knox County (marked in red on the map) is Tennessee's third-most populous county.

Knox County, Tennessee



National data show racial and ethnic disparities in breastfeeding initiation, exclusivity, and duration.¹ These racial and ethnic groups are also underrepresented in the lactation field and existing lactation education resources. A 2019 survey by the United States Lactation Consultant Association found that most lactation professionals identify as white and do not speak a language other than English.² Additionally, most existing lactation education resources primarily depict white mother-infant dyads.

Rates of Any Breastfeeding among Children Born in 2018

Populations	Ever Breastfed	Breastfed at 6 months	Breastfed at 12 months
US Population	83.9%	56.7%	35.0%
Non-Hispanic White	85.3%	60.0%	37.6%
Non-Hispanic Black	75.5%	49.3%	27.9%
Hispanic	85%	52.8%	32.3%

A collaborative team addressed this need by developing a racially and ethnically diverse curriculum to promote breastfeeding, supporting families at all stages of pregnancy and infant feeding, and developing a breastfeeding video series. The collaborative team included a variety of new and existing community partners led by the Knox County Health Department (KCHD), University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK), and Catholic Charities of East Tennessee (CCETN). The project was funded by the Tennessee Department of Health's Project Diabetes grant. CCETN is a coalition that provides breastfeeding education and resources to more than 1000 low-income families annually.

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/nis_data/rates-any-exclusive-bf-socio-dem-2018.html retrieved 7/14/2022

² <https://uslca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2019-Lactation-Care-Provider-Demographic-Survey.pdf> retrieved 6/22/2022

Collaborative Team

- Knox County Health Department
 - Community Health
 - WIC
- University of Tennessee - Knoxville
 - Department of Nutrition
 - Medical Center
 - Department of Modern Foreign Languages and Literature
- Loch & Key Productions
- Catholic Charities of East Tennessee
- Tennessee Department of Health

To identify topics for the new breastfeeding curriculum, students in the UTK NUTR 524 Public Health Nutrition: Community Assessment, Intervention, and Evaluation class conducted focus groups during the fall of 2019. Eight CCETN clients discussed breastfeeding supports received, challenges experienced, and information they wished they had known. The team used a modified nominal group process approach to rank topics. In 2020, the UTK Department of Nutrition faculty and Emily Wojtowicz, MS, RD, CSP, LD, IBCLC, a trainee in the [MCH Nutrition Training Program](#), used the findings from the focus group to develop a series of eight lesson plans.

KCHD/CCETN Breastfeeding Video Lessons

- Lesson 1: First Trimester
- Lesson 2: Second Trimester
- Lesson 3: Third Trimester
- Lesson 4: Postpartum Weeks 1-4
- Lesson 5: Postpartum Month 1
- Lesson 6: Postpartum Week 6
- Lesson 7: Postpartum Month 3
- Lesson 8: Weaning

In early 2021, the team adapted the lesson plans and created scripts by making the tone conversational, incorporating role-playing scenarios, and adding personal testimonials. The team secured videographers, filming locations, and talent to produce eight videos. Seven families that were racially and ethnically diverse and represented a variety of ages and breastfeeding stages and three lactation educators were selected to appear in the videos. The videos went through multiple rounds of review, ensuring the content reflected a diverse population, appropriate messaging, and quality video, audio, and graphics. The team faced challenges finding stock images and footage of non-white dyads; therefore, all stock footage utilized was reviewed closely for diversity.

Families that appear in the videos were provided gift cards for their efforts. In addition, the team hosted a red-carpet premiere to celebrate the launch of the videos and honor the

contributions of community partners and families. The event was inspired by a Hollywood film launch, including the red carpet, swag bags, and decorations.

Eight videos were developed to reduce breastfeeding disparities and promote equity and diversity in lactation education, with lactation educators and families representing the community. As of August 2022, the videos have received over 8000 views. The evaluation consists of a pretest with one question for each video followed by a short posttest specific to that video. Evaluation of the videos is ongoing, and the team plans to collect and analyze data quarterly.

The videos are available in English and Spanish. The videos are currently used by CCETN and in the Obstetric/Gynecologic Center at the University of Tennessee Medical Center. The team is also partnering with a local behavioral health center to implement the videos into parenting programs. WBIR, a local news station, featured the team's innovation in developing diverse breastfeeding education videos in an [August 2021 story](#).

The English videos are publicly available on the [Knox County Tennessee Health Department website](#). KCHD plans to have the Spanish versions available soon.