

"What Do You Say After You
Say 'Hello'?"

Telephone Counseling

Get Organized

Power Tools for
Telephone Helping

The Toolbox

- Phone log/forms
- Pen
- The “Womanly Art of Breastfeeding”
- The “Breastfeeding Answer Book”
- DSHS handouts
- Support group information
- Envelopes and stamps

Put the Mother at Ease

- Use Active Listening
- Ask Questions
- Give information and suggestions
- Respect differences among mothers

Practicing Good Listening

- Stop Talking!
- Give Attention
- Remove Distractions
- Be Patient
- Empathize
- Ask Questions
- Stop Talking!

If you are working from home,
let her know you are getting
your toolbox

"Let me get my notebook and a
pen so I can write this all down,
and then we can see if a pattern
emerges."

Matter-of-fact questions for
some basic information - her
name, address, etc.

- give her a chance to calm herself

Ask Basic Questions

- The mother's name, address, and phone number
- Who referred her
- Baby's name, age, birth weight, and present weight
- Other children and whether they were breastfed
- How can I help you...

Think of yourself as a detective or a good journalist

- Who
- What
- When
- Why
- How

Asking Effective Questions

- Think back over the past twenty four hours. At what times did your baby nurse?
- Did you or your baby (who) signal the end of the nursing?
- Did he seem satisfied? If not, what did you do?
- How many wet and dirty diapers did he have during the last 24 hours?"

Suppose that a new mother
asks,

"What kind of pacifier do you
recommend? I can't nurse the
baby all day - there is the house to
take care of, too!"

Perhaps she is asking because:

- She is nursing infrequently, resulting in a hungry baby.
- She believes that her baby must be slowed down to meet a certain schedule.
- Her mother-in-law is coming to visit and she thinks that she needs to have a perfectly clean and tidy house.
- She thinks that babies need to have pacifiers because "everybody" uses them.

Or maybe...

- Someone told her not to let her baby use her breasts as pacifiers or she will get sore.
- She was given a pacifier by the hospital but the baby doesn't like it.
- She has sore nipples and breastfeeding is painful.

What could you ask to elicit more information about why the mother wants to use a pacifier?

Use your keypad to raise your hand

There may be more to the question than she is saying

"When we went to the doctor for the two week checkup, Annie had not yet regained her birth weight. I was told to give her a bottle after every feeding. How long do you think I will have to do this?"

Some of the possibilities:

- Mother may not have been nursing often enough
 - Pacifier use
 - Mother didn't recognize the baby's cues
 - Baby is still sleepy from the drugs that the mother received in labor
 - Mother may have been restricting each feeding to a set number of minutes at each breast

Other Possibilities

- Her baby may be poorly attached
 - Mother may be sore but not complaining, or she might think it is normal for breastfeeding to hurt
- Her baby may be ill
 - Severe jaundice
 - Undetected heart problem, rendering him too tired or weak to nurse well

It's a Mystery

- Learn how to recognize and sift through the clues, discarding the red herrings until the truth emerges

Using Active Listening

- Rephrasing what the mother has said
 - “Let me see if I am following you. You said...”
 - “You seem to be telling me...”
 - “I hear you saying that...”

Present information in a positive way

- Instead of saying:
 - “If you give solids before the baby is about six months old, he has a good chance of developing allergies.”
- Try:
 - *Babies who have only mother’s milk until about the middle of the first year after birth develop fewer allergies.*

Positive ways to offer suggestions

- “Would you like to hear what other mothers have done in a similar situation?”
- “How would you feel about?”
- “Many mothers have found...”

Allow her to accept or reject your suggestions

- Do you think that this will work for you?
- What do you think about these options?

When is telephone help not
enough?

When to refer

When is it appropriate to see a mother in person?

- If it hurts to breastfeed
- If a mother is concerned about her baby's poor weight gain

When should you refer

- The baby is not gaining weight.
- The baby is weak or listless.
- The baby is tense, hypertonic (points his toes, arches, and screams).
- The baby is unable to suckle.
- The baby is noticeably dehydrated (insufficient number of wet diapers, dry mouth, dry eyes, and poor skin tone).
- Anything out of the ordinary or whenever something just feels wrong.