



FROM CONNECTION TO COLLECTIVE ACTION:

CREATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FOR
WIC OUTREACH

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OBJECTIVES

- Explore innovative and culturally resonant strategies WIC staff can use to engage and connect with families beyond the clinic setting.
- Highlight the power of storytelling, social media, grassroots organizing, and cross-sector collaboration tool build trust and strengthen breastfeeding support systems within diverse communities.
- Share practical, real-world examples of how partnering with local businesses, faith-based groups, and cultural events can create sustainable breastfeeding-friendly environments that reflect the needs of the populations WIC serves.

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PULSE CHECK



What are some of the biggest challenges you're seeing in your communities when it comes to accessing resources, lactation care or reaching families who need support?



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THE ANSWERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY EXIST WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

Centering voices closest to the issue.



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IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY BASED CARE

Care-Seeking Preferences:

- Local WIC agencies are “hubs of breastfeeding support for families during the prenatal, perinatal, and postpartum periods.”
- The availability of community resources is positively associated with increased breastfeeding rates (LoCaSale-Crouch et. al, 2024)

Identify Community Needs and Stakeholders

- Survey existing data on breastfeeding rates, breastfeeding support, and postpartum supports
- Who are the major players in the area? (Doula groups, Local Organizations, Local Voices)

Implications:

- Traditional clinical settings are not effectively reaching all new parents
- Need for diverse and community-based approaches

LoCasale-Crouch, J., Wallace, M., Heeren, T., Kerr, S., Yue, Y., Deeken, G., Turnbull, K., Jaworski, B., Mateus, M., Moon, R., Hauck, F., Kellams, A., Colson, E., & Corwin, M. (2024). The importance of community resources for breastfeeding. *International Breastfeeding Journal*, 19(1), 16. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13006-024-00623-2>

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SOUNDS GREAT...BUT WHAT DOES THIS ACTUALLY LOOK LIKE?

Let's get into the real-world strategies, examples, and action steps.



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ENGAGING LOCAL BUSINESSES & FAITH-BASED GROUPS

- Why these spaces matter
- How to create sustainable partnerships
- **Ideas:** infant feeding friendly spaces, utilizing space for prenatal classes, donations, community baby shower, business pledges, etc.



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BUILDING “NEIGHBORHOOD” CONNECTIONS

Community-Driven Approaches

- Empowering communities to lead breastfeeding initiatives.
- Neighborhood-level programs create lasting impact by involving local stakeholders (churches, schools, businesses).

Targeted Support Spaces

- Establish safe, accessible spaces where families can breastfeed and receive support—right in their community.

Collaborating with Trusted Figures

- Community-based peer support programs can empower parents to support each other.

Making Breastfeeding Part of the Local Culture

- Integrate breastfeeding support into the fabric of the community, making it just another part of everyday life.

Pierre, J., Valdez, J., Marshall-Taylor, S., et al. (2025). Fostering community support for breastfeeding: Implementation of a neighborhood level breastfeeding initiative in Brooklyn, New York. *Journal of Community Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-025-01446-w>

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THINKING BEYOND THE CLINIC

Lactation support doesn't have to live in a clinic.
It can—and should—show up in the everyday spaces where families already
are.



A lactation tent at a local baseball tournament

- Let parents feed, pump, and rest without missing their older kid's big moment.



Support booth at a farmer's market

- Where fresh food and fresh information flow side by side.



After-service Q&A at a faith center

- Bring culturally relevant lactation guidance to trusted community spaces.
- Encourage center to have a lactation friendly space where parents can still engage with the service.

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PROGRAMMING PARTNERSHIPS



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FAMILY CENTERED CARE & EDUCATION



Informed Families = Empowered Families

- Education shouldn't stop at the lactating parent—when partners, grandparents, and other caregivers understand breastfeeding basics, outcomes improve.



Normalize Conversations Beyond the Clinic

- Use family-friendly language and visuals that make breastfeeding a community norm—not just a medical recommendation.



Shared Support Reduces Stress

- Family-centered approaches reduce pressure on the parent, improving mental health, bonding, and feeding success.

World Health Organization. (2022). Infant and young child feeding: Counselling: An integrated course. World Health Organization.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240064485>

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FAMILY-CENTERED CARE MEANS CENTERING DADS, TOO

- A birthing person's decision to offer human milk is significantly influenced by their partner's opinion and support.
- Dads/partners play a key role in both the **initiation** and **duration** of breastfeeding.
- Emotional encouragement and hands-on help from partners can make or break the breast/chestfeeding journey.
- An educated and confident dad also becomes a buffer against outside pressures/advice
- When we educate and include partners, we empower the whole family.

Agrawal, J., Chakole, S., & Sachdev, C. (2022). The Role of Fathers in Promoting Exclusive Breastfeeding. Cureus, 14(10), e30363. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.30363>

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PROGRAMMING/MESSAGING FOR DADS + PARTNERS



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EMBEDDING SUPPORT IN CLINICAL SETTINGS & BEYOND

- **Partner with local hospitals** to have WIC staff visit postpartum units: enroll newborns on-site and introduce families to breastfeeding peer counselors before discharge.
- **Coordinate with NICUs** to streamline access to breast pumps and educational materials—arranging drop-offs for families who can't travel.
- **Collaborate with community doulas, SLPs, and PTs** to offer holistic support and position WIC as part of a trusted, wraparound care network.



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THE ART OF STORYTELLING

People may forget the facts, but they'll remember how
your
story made them feel.

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SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE GOOGLE FOR NEW PARENTS

Where questions meet real-time answers—and judgment-free connection

Parents Are Searching for Lived Experience, Not Just Clinical Advice

- They want to hear from people who've been there—not just textbook definitions.

Community = Credibility

- When people see your taskforce active and authentic online, it builds trust and accessibility.

Be Where They Already Are

- If parents are scrolling for support at 2AM, let your presence be part of what they find.
- Make content that challenges misinformation

Not Your Ministry? Be prepared with trusted resources/pages to share with your families!

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THE ART OF STORYTELLING

♥ Stories Build Trust

- Sharing real-life experiences—yours or your clients' (with permission)—helps families feel seen, reduces stigma, and normalizes struggle and success.

🗣️ Storytelling Makes Education Stick

- Wrap facts inside a narrative to help messages land. A story about cluster feeding is more memorable than a bullet point about it.

🌍 Stories Shift Community Culture

- Highlighting diverse voices and experiences challenges stereotypes, uplifts underrepresented communities, and makes breast/chestfeeding feel accessible and real.

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LEVERAGING AI

We can utilize AI platforms (ChatGPT, Perplexity) to:

- Stay up to date with trends (ex. doll packs)
- Generate content calendars, blog outlines, and captions - keeping your message consistent and creative without burnout.



THINKING OF AI AS A TOOL, NOT A REPLACEMENT

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“WE ARE THE ONES WE’VE BEEN WAITING FOR.”

Dr. Kimarie Bugg DNP, FNP-C, MPH, IBCLC

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REFERENCES

Agrawal, J., Chakole, S., & Sachdev, C. (2022). The role of fathers in promoting exclusive breastfeeding. *Cureus*, 14(10), e30363. <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.30363>

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2018). Optimizing support for breastfeeding as part of obstetric practice (Committee Opinion No. 756). *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, 132(4), e187–e196. <https://doi.org/10.1097/AOG.0000000000002927>

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QUESTIONS?



LET'S CONNECT

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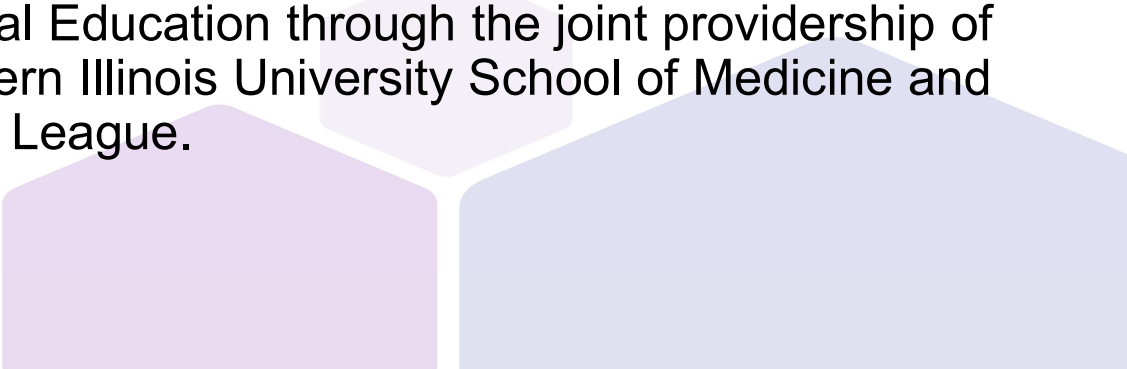
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ocpd@siumed.edu



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