

# Exploring Infant Nutrition and Moving Toward Solutions

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# Exploring Infant Nutrition

*Some families are just thankful that they are able to eat and that they have something to feed their children.*

*~Respondent*

*People want to feel proud of who they are and what they are able to provide their family.*

*~Respondent*

# Infant Nourishment and Food Security

- Child poverty in Saskatchewan (2005)
  - Total: 18.3%
  - Aboriginal children: 50%
- Consequences of infant food insecurity

# A Research Study

## ■ Beginnings

- Department of Community Resources, Government of Saskatchewan and CHEP Good Food Inc.

## ■ Explorations

- Infant nutrition in Saskatoon
- Barriers and challenges
- Recommendations

# Methods

- Advisory Committee
- Participant Selection
  - Focus groups (n=9)
  - Stakeholder interviews (n=9)
- Data Collection
  - Semi-structured focus groups and interviews
- Thematic Analysis

# Infant Feeding Practices

- Feeding practices
  - Formula feeding (birth onward) - 15%
  - Combination (birth onward) - 4%
  - Breastfeeding duration
    - 0-4 mo. - 26%
    - 4-6 mo. - 8%
    - 7-9 mo. - 10%
    - >9 mo. - 37%

# Choosing Breastfeeding or Formula Feeding

## ■ Influences

- Knowledge and experience
- Peer/family pressure
- Expense of formula
- Perceived health benefits (breastfeeding)
- Returning to work/school
- Breastfeeding difficulties

# Barriers & Challenges

- Poverty
- Financial
- Health of the family
- Mother's health & nutrition
- Appropriate and available information
- Access to services
- Skills

# Recommendations

- Provision of infant formula
- Breastfeeding support
- Support for services
- Social policy changes
- Improved information

# A Change in Attitude

*"We have an obligation as a society. If we're really sincere in wanting the best outcome for all our children in this province we need to tackle family poverty and child nutrition."*

*~stakeholder*

# Moving Toward Solutions

- Report, March 2007
  - Expanding services
  - Expanding programming opportunities
  - Support for breastfeeding
  - Emergency and affordable infant formula
  - Social policy changes

# Report Back to Community

- Distributed report to all participants and key stakeholders
- Organized a meeting with a broad based group of organizations, institutions and parents
  - Discussion
  - Short and long term action plans

# Moving Towards Solutions



Collaboration with community

Partnerships

Balance between encouraging breastfeeding  
and supplying much needed emergency  
infant foods.

# Partnership Voices

It is important that all moms and families know what supports are out there so that no one in our community feels like they are all alone.

*- Public Health*

We are interested in continuing to develop adequate, consistent information on hospital wards.

*- Healthy and Home*

Working on this committee has made me feel important and like I am making a difference and as a mom. As a childcare provider I know how important infant nutrition is.

*- Nikki (mother on advisory committee)*

I think the study of infant nutrition is timely and crucial to improving our community. Healthy babies are the first step to healthy communities.

*- Anita Amyotte (mother on advisory committee)*

[improvements come] by focusing more on policies and programs that will create healthy families, and healthy families will then raise healthy children who will make healthy choices...

*- Community organization member*

# Three Tiered Approach to Addressing Infant Nutrition in Saskatoon

## ADVOCACY

- Policy Work
- Ensuring the Right to Food
- Encouraging Breastfeeding Friendly and Baby Friendly initiatives

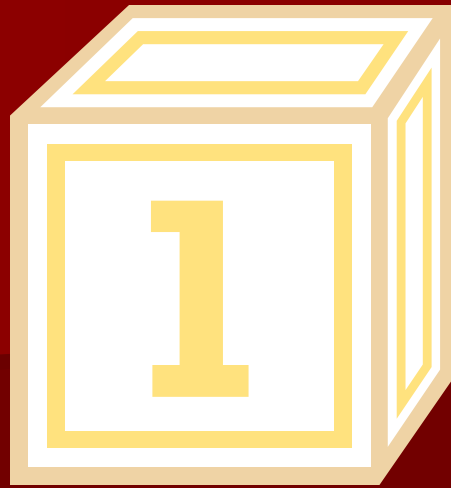
## SUSTAINABLE SUPPORT

- Mothers' Centre
- Bulk Buying
- Community breast pump depot
- Improved ward support and information

## EMERGENCY SUPPORT

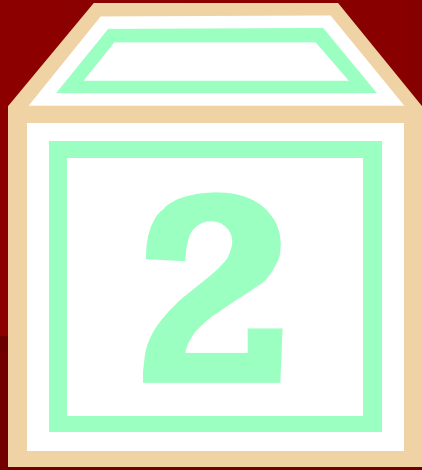
- Emergency Formula
- Human milk bank





# Tier One: System support

- **Advocacy**
  - Advocate for a commitment from various levels of community and government to create a community that is safe and provides adequate support for all babies.
  
- **Ensuring the right to food**
  - Advocate for the right to food to be recognized for all members of the community, particularly infants and toddlers.
  
- **Encouraging Breastfeeding and Baby Friendly initiatives**
  - Encourage those initiatives that support breastfeeding such as Baby Friendly workplaces and Baby Friendly public spaces.



## Tier Two: Long-term support

- Bulk buying
  - Organize monthly bulk buying of formula to allow families to stretch their budget and ensure that they will have enough formula for the month.
- Mothers' centres
  - Establish drop-in mothers' centres where moms can connect with and support one another.
- Breast pump library
  - Create a breast pump library in our neighborhood so moms who cannot afford to buy their own can borrow a breast pump.
- Ward support
  - Support the education needs of maternity ward nurses and staff to ensure that all moms receive post-partum support.
- Appropriate and accessible information
  - We have created and are distributing an emergency infant support brochure to improve knowledge of existing resources.



## Tier Three: Short-term support

- Emergency infant foods
  - We are working with the food bank improve formula distribution abilities.
- Human milk bank
  - Partner with Public Health and Breastfeeding Matters to promote the creation of a place where babies, particularly those born pre-mature or at risk for other reasons, can access human milk.

# Final Reflections

*I was brought up knowing that breastfeeding my baby was the best way. I was judgmental of moms that choose formula or stopped breastfeeding so early. I am not under this impression anymore.*  
~Chandra

*This study has opened my eyes to the poverty and suffering in my own neighbourhood. I never realized how many women don't breastfeed because they thought their own nutrition was not adequate enough.*  
~Nikki

# Thank You

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Susan Whiting

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# For more information

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# Questions & Discussion