

Tuesday October 1

Equity in the first embrace: ensuring universal skin to skin care

"Tent Talk" with Monika – Monika Rumbolt: NunatuKavut Inuk Visual Artist, Author, Youth engagement officer, Ulnooweg Indigenous Foundation

Indigenous tents, steeped in the tapestries of time, offer not just shelter and warmth, but a haven for kinship and unity. Within their sacred confines, stories are woven, bonds are forged, and spirits commune in harmony. Prepare yourself a cup of tea and embark with Monika on a journey of ancestral traditions, where the art of sharing sets the tone for the theme of today.

Opening Address for BCC BFI Virtual Symposium 2024 – Dr. Krista Jangaard, Neonatologist, President & CEO of IWK, Associate Professor, Dalhousie University

Leadership plays a vital role in creating an organizational culture that supports breastfeeding and baby-friendly practices. Dr. Krista Jangaard, Neonatologist, President and CEO of IWK Health Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia shares her thoughts and experiences of leading a tertiary care facility that has recently been re-designated Baby-Friendly.

Supporting Breastfeeding Initiation, Skin to Skin Contact, Transition from Hospital to Community - Ann Bigelow Ph.D, MA, BA, Senior Research Professor, St. Francis Xavier University

Mother-infant skin-to-skin contact (SSC) is shown to include social-cognitive benefits to infants beyond the newborn period and long-term benefits into the children's middle childhood. In a quasi-experiment with intervention and control groups, the effect of SSC on full-term infants' social-cognitive development and their mothers' behavior was examined over the infants' first three months. A follow-up study nine years later was conducted with these dyads.

Wednesday October 2

Unlocking potential within health systems to address barriers to breastfeeding support

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Going Farther Together: A journey into true partnership with Parent Partners and Baby-Friendly Initiative Designation - Leah Whitehead, Parent Partner Coordinator - NICU, IWK Health Centre

In spring 2024, IWK Health in Halifax participated in a BFI External Assessment Pilot on behalf of the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. For the first time, on-site interviews would be conducted internally by IWK employees. In this presentation, Leah Whitehead, IWK NICU Parent Partner Coordinator, will share the key tenets that set this pilot up for success and her reflections on how this model of team could be implemented nation-wide.

A Call to Action on strategies to dismantle breastfeeding barriers among vulnerable population of mothers affected by disasters and displacement - Dr. Shela Hirani PhD, MScN, BScN, RN, IBCLC, Associate Professor, University of Regina, Pediatrics, Maternal and Child Health (Focus: Human Lactation)

Breastfeeding is an ideal nutrition that can save the lives of more than 820,000 young children each year, especially during the time of disasters and displacement when mothers lack necessities of life, such as clean water, food, sanitation facilities, privacy and adequate shelter. Hear from Dr. Hirani on strategies to dismantle barriers to breastfeeding support for refugee families.

Thursday October 3

Nourishing the Future: supporting the journey through the first 1000 days

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Leading Early Years Redesign: Supporting Infant Feeding for Nova Scotians - Dr. Ryan Sommers BSc, MD, CCFP, FRCPC (PHPM), Senior Regional Medical Officer of Health, Senior Medical Director of Public Health, Family Physician, CEHHC. AND Marcia DeSantis RN, BScN, MPH, Senior Director, NSH Population and Public Health

The Public Health Early Years Program of Nova Scotia has recently received significant public health enhancements aimed at advising early years programming across Nova Scotia. These enhancements include the integration of Infant Feeding Specialists (i.e., IBCLCs) and Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) Health Promoters into multidisciplinary teams. This presentation will highlight how strategic leadership and vision can drive the successful implementation of these enhancements and improve breastfeeding rates and overall health outcomes of families in Nova Scotia.

Nurse-Family Partnership: Nurturing Beginnings for Lifelong Impact - Bonnie Maxwell, RN & Lisa MacRae, RN, NFP Charge Nurses, Early Years, Nova Scotia Health, Public Health AND Jen MacDougall, RN, Early Years Manager, Eastern Zone, Nova Scotia Health Public Health

Nova Scotia is an unfortunate leader of poverty in Canada. Poverty and stress are associated with adverse pregnancy, child and family health outcomes and are known barriers to breastfeeding. Pregnant people can face disproportionate and overlapping challenges that can be intensified when welcoming a new baby. In this presentation, we will discover how Nurse-Family Partnership (NFP), an evidence-based, relationship focused, voluntary home-visiting program, provides long-term support, guidance, and information to help families reach their goals and improve infant feeding and health outcomes.

Insights from the Nova Scotia Understanding Feeding in the Early Year Study, and emerging challenges for food security in the first 1000 days - Lesley Frank BA, MA, Ph.D. Tier II Canada Research Chair in Food, Health and Social Justice, Professor of Sociology, Director of The Fed Family Lab

Food insecurity poses social and nutritional risk for our youngest people through undermining breastfeeding and other ways of feeding. Redressing the risks are crucial because the first 1000 days from conception to 2 years is the most critical for optimal growth and development, setting a trajectory for life-long health. This presentation will showcase a tool developed for exploring infant food insecurities, as well as findings from the Understanding Feeding in the Early Years project conducted at Acadia University in 2022. The tool was tested with over 1400 NS families in 2022 and retested in Summer 2024 in Canada and the US.

Friday October 4

Promoting Equity in Breastfeeding Support

Panel Discussion

Breastfeeding is well-established as the optimal form of nutrition for infants and young children. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life with continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond is recommended globally to improve health outcomes.

While the majority of families in Canada initiate breastfeeding, significant disparities exist in breastfeeding exclusivity and duration that are strongly shaped by the structural and social determinants of health.

Access to breastfeeding supports and programs are an important part of increasing breastfeeding rates and improving families feeding experiences. However, breastfeeding supports must center equity and be accessible and sustainable (including during emergencies).

Hear the panelists' reflections, experiences and take away strategies to promote equitable breastfeeding support so more families can achieve their feeding goals and work towards equity in breastfeeding outcomes.

