



Understanding Disparities and the Historical Significance of Breastfeeding in Communities of Color

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“THE BOOB BOSS”

OSDH WIC Conference 2023

About me

- ❖ Nurse for 15 years
- ❖ Took the long road
 - ❖ CNA, CMA, ADN, BSN, ARNP, BOSS
- ❖ Master's degree from Georgetown in May 2015
- ❖ Started The Perfect Push, PLLC (TPP) in Aug 2015
- ❖ Opened TPP Lactation & Wellness Clinic in Jan 2019
- ❖ Founded TPP Foundation in Aug 2019
- ❖ Relocated to The Bay Area in 2022
- ❖ Mom to 3 beautiful chocolate rascals:
 - ❖ Tai (10y) Tana (6y) and Gray-Gray 20 mos
- ❖ Wife to an amazingly patient man #instahubs



Learning Objectives

- ❖ Review and understand the data around health disparities affecting communities of color.
- ❖ Understand the historical trauma and narrative surrounding breastfeeding for women of color
- ❖ Examine the role corporate America, society and social media plays in perpetuating health disparities
- ❖ Become aware of how we, as medical professionals, contribute to breastfeeding disparities
- ❖ Identify and address breastfeeding health disparities in our clinical practice
- ❖ Learn how we can set our patients up for success

National Breastfeeding Initiation Rates

- ❖ 2007: 73.8%.³
- ❖ 2022: Almost 84%.⁴

There is definitely a reason to celebrate, right?

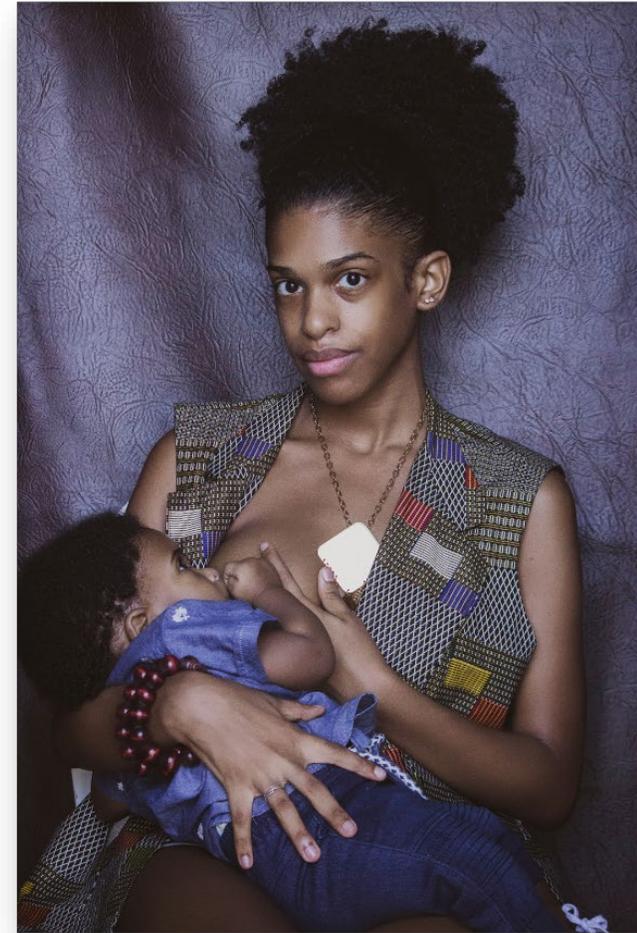


Breastfeeding Initiation Rates Amongst Black Women

❖ **2022: 73.6%**

Still below the national average in 2007, 15 years ago.⁴

Have we really made progress?



The Numbers

Breastfeeding indicator	All infants					Infants who had initiated breastfeeding				
	Non-Hispanic white		Non-Hispanic black		Percentage point difference ^s	Non-Hispanic white		Non-Hispanic black		Percentage point difference ^s
	No.	% (95% CI)	No.	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)	No.	% (95% CI)	No.	% (95% CI)	% (95% CI)
Initiated breastfeeding	9,907	85.9 (84.7 to 87.1)	1,607	69.4 (65.9 to 73.0)	16.5 (12.7 to 20.2) [¶]	8,729	N/A	1,159	N/A	N/A
Any breastfeeding at age 3 mos	9,907	72.7 (71.2 to 74.2)	1,607	58.0 (54.2 to 61.7)	14.7 (10.7 to 18.8) [¶]	8,729	84.7 (83.4 to 85.9)	1,159	83.5 (80.3 to 86.7)	1.2 (-2.3 to 4.6)
Exclusive breastfeeding through age 3 mos	9,537	53.0 (51.4 to 54.7)	1,573	36.0 (32.2 to 39.7)	17.0 (12.9 to 21.2) [¶]	8,359	62.2 (60.5 to 63.9)	1,125	52.3 (47.8 to 56.9)	9.9 (5.0 to 14.7) [¶]
Any breastfeeding at age 6 mos	9,907	62.0 (60.4 to 63.6)	1,607	44.7 (40.9 to 48.5)	17.3 (13.1 to 21.4) [¶]	8,729	72.2 (70.6 to 73.8)	1,159	64.4 (60.2 to 68.6)	7.8 (3.3 to 12.3) [¶]
Exclusive breastfeeding through age 6 mos	9,537	29.5 (28.0 to 31.1)	1,573	17.2 (14.1 to 20.2)	12.4 (8.9 to 15.8) [¶]	8,359	34.7 (32.9 to 36.4)	1,125	25.0 (20.8 to 29.2)	9.7 (5.1 to 14.2) [¶]

Abbreviations: CI = confidence interval; N/A = not applicable.

* Breastfeeding initiation was determined according to participant's response to the question "Was [child] ever breastfed or fed breast milk?" Breastfeeding duration was determined according to participant's response to the question "How old was [child's name] when [child's name] completely stopped breastfeeding or being fed breast milk?" Exclusive breastfeeding was defined as only breast milk (no solids, no water, and no other liquids). To assess the duration of exclusive breastfeeding, participants were asked two questions about age: 1) "How old was [child's name] when he/she was first fed formula?" and 2) "How old was [child's name] when he/she was first fed anything other than breast milk or formula?" (This includes juice, cow's milk, sugar water, baby food, or anything else that [child] might have been given, even water).

TABLE 1. Demographic characteristics of non-Hispanic white and non-Hispanic black infants born in 2015 included in national prevalence estimates of breastfeeding initiation and duration at ages 3 and 6 months — National Immunization Survey-Child, United States, 2016–2017*

Characteristic	Non-Hispanic white (n = 9,907)		Non-Hispanic black (n = 1,607)	
	No.	% (95% CI) [†]	No.	% (95% CI) [†]
% of poverty level[‡]				
<100	1,312	17.8 (16.5–19.1)	635	49.3 (45.5–53.1)
100–199	1,703	18.7 (17.4–20.0)	366	21.0 (18.2–23.8)
200–399	2,909	27.9 (26.5–29.3)	327	16.1 (13.7–18.4)
400–599	1,967	17.7 (16.5–19.0)	110	5.8 (4.3–7.3)
≥600	2,016	17.9 (16.6–19.3)	169	7.8 (5.2–10.4)
Recipient of WIC[§]				
Yes	2,723	34.1 (32.5–35.8)	1,137	78.2 (75.5–80.9)
No, but eligible	836	9.0 (8.1–9.8)	107	6.8 (5.0–8.5)
Ineligible	6,298	56.9 (55.2–58.6)	356	15.0 (12.8–17.2)
Mother's education				
Less than high school diploma or GED	460	7.4 (6.3–8.4)	199	16.2 (12.7–19.7)
High school diploma or GED	1,394	20.2 (18.8–21.6)	391	32.2 (28.5–35.8)
Some college	2,435	23.4 (22.0–24.8)	491	26.3 (23.2–29.4)
College graduate	5,618	49.1 (47.4–50.7)	526	25.3 (22.3–28.3)
Mother's age group (yrs)				
<20	70	1.1 (0.7–1.5)	40	2.8 (1.6–4.0)
20–29	2,943	34.4 (32.8–36.1)	679	45.2 (41.4–49.0)
≥30	6,894	64.5 (62.8–66.1)	888	52.0 (48.2–55.8)
Mother's marital status				
Married	8,097	76.1 (74.6–77.7)	682	34.5 (31.1–37.8)
Unmarried	1,810	23.9 (22.3–25.4)	925	65.5 (62.2–68.9)

Abbreviations: GED = general educational development certificate; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for
* Based on National Immunization Survey-Child data from survey years 2016–2017, among infants born in 2015.
[†] Statistics in this table are based on participants who responded to questions about any breastfeeding at ages 3 and smaller for participants who also responded to questions about exclusive breastfeeding at ages 3 and 6 months.
[‡] Ratio of self-reported family income to the poverty threshold value defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.
[§] Sample sizes for the proportions of participants receiving WIC are slightly smaller due to missing data on WIC status

The Numbers

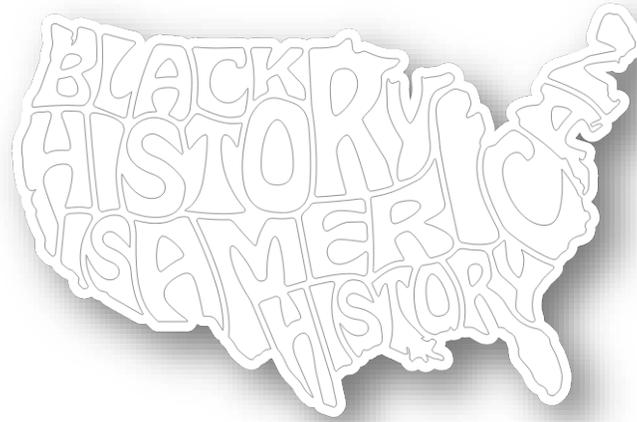


Sensitive Content

THE FOLLOWING CONTENT MAY BE UPSETING TO SOME VEIWERS.



What do you see?



- ❖ Wives of slave owners timed their pregnancies with that of their slaves
- ❖ Forcefully separated enslaved new mothers from their infants
- ❖ Enslaved mothers then served as wet nurses for slave owner's children.

The black mothers were often beaten and milked like cows to feed white babies.
(Kirti, 2021)

American History

Black slave mothers were forced into being wet nurses during slavery.

Society – Myths in the Black Community

- ❖ Breastfeeding makes your breasts droop
- ❖ Formula feeding is easier than breastfeeding
- ❖ Black women don't breastfeed
- ❖ Breastfeeding hurts
- ❖ Breastfeeding will spoil your baby
- ❖ Your partner won't find you attractive
- ❖ Breastfeeding is for poor people
- ❖ Formula is better for baby

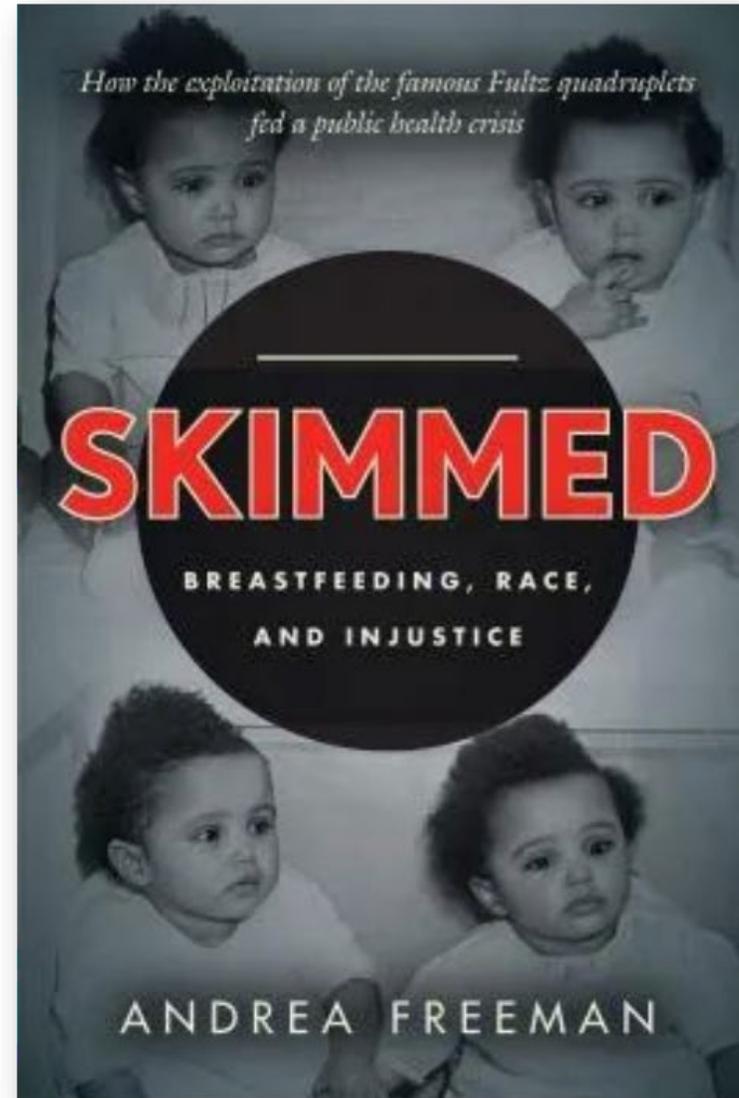


Predators

THE FORMULA INDUSTRY

The Fultz Twins

- ❖ 1946
- ❖ First set of documented identical quadruplets
- ❖ A pediatrician self-servingly negotiated a deal with then Pet-Milk Company
- ❖ They offered to sponsor the girls covering medical expenses, “cost of living.”
- ❖ The Fultz girls were featured in all of Pet-Milk’s marketing, with the goal of attracting more black families
- ❖ A few pictures a year gave birth to what is now a billion-dollar industry



Organized Crime

- ❖ Images portraying happy black formula feeding moms
- ❖ “Chunky” formula fed babies
- ❖ Formula as a status symbol
- ❖ In 2023 Formula Companies are now using Social Media companies to promote formula feeding⁶





Influencers

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

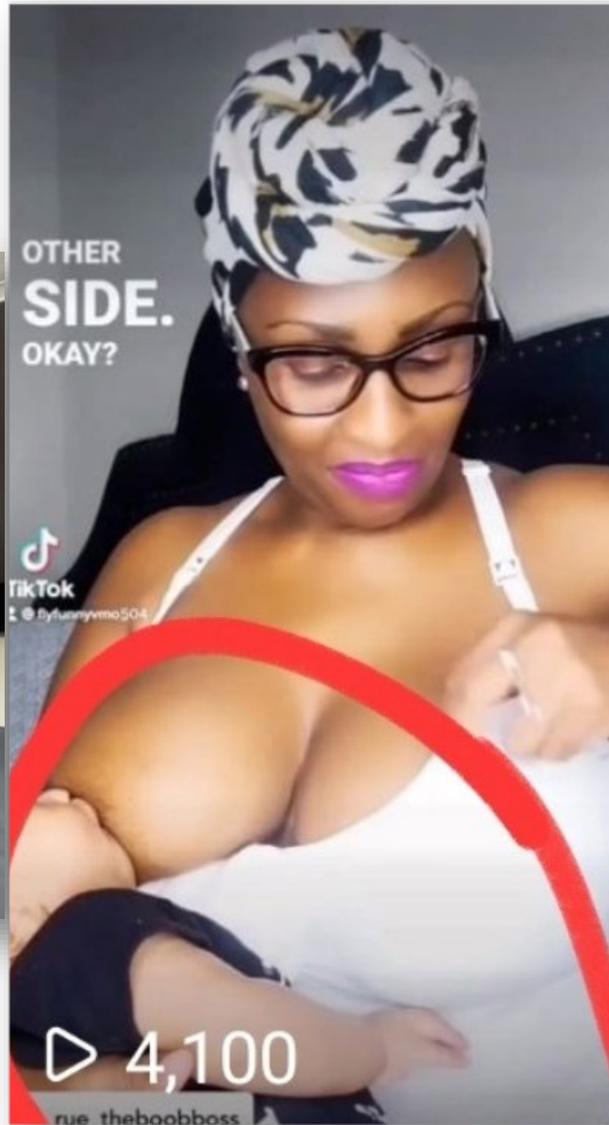
Social Media

@iambeautycurve



Are they really choosing?

500K Views



Shaming

SEXUALIZATION OF
BREASTFEEDING MOMS

@rue_thebooboss



Us

THE ROLE OF LACTATION PROVIDERS



Implicit Bias

IMPLICIT BIAS IS A FORM OF BIAS THAT OCCURS AUTOMATICALLY AND UNINTENTIONALLY, THAT NEVERTHELESS AFFECTS JUDGMENTS, DECISIONS, AND BEHAVIORS.¹¹



My Recent Experience

What happens when providers treat what they see
NOT what they hear

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The Numbers

Parenting while black

- ❖ Less likely to receive prenatal education or have lactation support postpartum
- ❖ Black moms are NINE times more likely to be offered formula in the hospital
- ❖ Less likely to have a family history of breastfeeding
- ❖ Less likely to have the support of their immediate family



Get to know your patients

Instead of...

- ❖ Are you planning to breastfeed?
- ❖ Have you heard breastfeeding is uncomfortable or will ruin your breasts?
- ❖ Are you the first person in your family to breastfeed?
- ❖ I am here/call if you need anything?

Try saying...

- ❖ Have you put in any thought on how you will feed your baby?
- ❖ Can you share your thoughts on breastfeeding or what you know about breastfeeding?
- ❖ Has anyone in your immediate family or circle breastfed? What have you heard from them?
- ❖ How can I best support you and your feeding goals.



**Setting Our
Patients Up
For Success**

USPSTF Recommendation – Grade B



The U.S. Preventive services task force (USPSTF) found adequate evidence indicating that interventions, such as **formal breastfeeding education** for mothers and families, increase the rates of **initiation**, **duration**, and **exclusivity of breastfeeding**.

Therefore, the USPSTF guidelines recommend interventions **during pregnancy** and **after birth** to promote and support breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding begins before baby!

My Recommendations

- ❖ Extensive and quality multifaceted prenatal breastfeeding education
- ❖ Intentional and planned breastfeeding education encounters included in regular prenatal exams
- ❖ Routine prenatal breastfeeding consults
- ❖ Increasing availability of access to classes and lactation support professionals
- ❖ Increasing and diversifying lactation support professionals





Questions?



Thank You!