

# Breastfeeding:

## Education

### for life



This childbirth/  
breastfeeding doll  
is designed by  
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All over the world there is increasing knowledge and concern about early child development and “significant interactions” in the family. There is widespread interest in improving the quality of child care and in integrating knowledge about the needs of the developing child into our education systems and curriculum. However, the significance of breastfeeding for human development and for the quality of life of families is rarely considered.

The exciting “news” from ongoing research is that breastfeeding is not only important for health, nutrition and the development of a baby’s trust and sense of security, but enhances brain development and learning readiness as well (See Box on pg. 3 and page 6 for list of references). For example:

- Special fatty acids in breastmilk lead to increased intelligence quotients (IQs) and better visual acuity (Andraca I and Uauy R, 1995, reference on pg. 6).
- Breastfed babies have fewer ear infections, which have been associated with hearing loss and learning delays.
- Several studies have shown better school achievement in breastfed children, even at the end of secondary school and when controlling for social class, mother’s education and race.

Therefore, this year’s World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) theme addresses the need to integrate information on the importance of breastfeeding into our educational systems at all levels.

It should be reinforced that infants should be fed exclusively on breastmilk from birth to six months of age. Thereafter, children should continue to be breastfed, while receiving appropriate complementary foods, for up to two years of age or beyond.

**The goals of World Breastfeeding Week 1999 on the theme of “Breastfeeding: Education for Life” are to:**

- Increase public awareness of the importance of protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding as the standard for infant development and growth.
- Encourage the incorporation of education on breastfeeding and appropriate infant feeding practices into all levels of formal and informal education.
- Improve relevant curriculum design with all types of educators and trainers from professional institutions, medical and other teaching schools, health organizations, public and private schools, hospitals and community education centers.
- Involve school children, from pre-school onward, and teenagers in WBW 1999 activities and provide tools for popular education appropriate for different age groups.
- Encourage the integration of breastfeeding experiences and practices into children’s developmental materials and toys.



# WABA'99

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action