

# BIOLOGICAL NURTURING, or NATURAL BREASTFEEDING POSITION: Mothers & Babies (and You) Will Love It!

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Lactation Clinic  
Family Health Promotion Center, Sharjah

## Objectives

- Discuss the innate mammal newborn feeding behaviour
- Describe the 'biological nurturing' concept
- Describe the 'natural breastfeeding position'

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## PLAN

- Introduction
- Resources
- Innate mammal newborn feeding behaviour
- Recent discovery for human infant
- Principles of 'Biological Nurturing'
- The 'Natural Breastfeeding Position' approach
- Conclusion

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## Just After Birth




- Breast crawl and self-attachment

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## Let's Think 'Out of the Box'

Are babies able to self-attach only during the first hour?

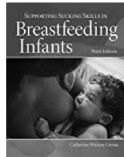
Why teaching /reaching an optimal latch seems so difficult?




Is breastfeeding a 'learnt skill' or an instinct?

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## Resources




'Supporting Sucking Skills in Breastfeeding Infants'  
Catherine Watson Genna,  
3rd Ed. (2017)



'Introduction to Biological Nurturing',  
Dr Suzanne Colson  
2010



DVD 'Biological Nurturing',  
Laid-back BF  
Dr Suzanne Colson



DVD Baby-Led BF  
Dr Christina Millie  
2010

Natural BF position  
Nancy Mohrbacher  
Dr Theresa  
Vimeo.com  
Youtube

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### PLAN

- Introduction
- Resources
- **Innate mammal newborn feeding behaviour**
- **Recent discovery for human infant**
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### Mammals

Do all these newborn mammals share **common competencies**?

**MAMMALS**


- have hair or fur
- give birth to live young
- mammal mothers nurse their young with milk
- mammals that live on land have 4 legs, and ears that stick out
- warm-blooded

ejournal.fi 7

### Innate Mammalian Newborn Behaviours (in Non-Human Mammals)

From species to species, the immediate postnatal behaviours of all mammalian newborns are remarkably similar:

- Short period of recovery
- Then searches for the teat
- Finds it without maternal assistance
- Initiates feeding.




Newborn Baby Grey Kangaroo - Attenborough-Life of Mammals-BBC

<https://seaworld.org/animals/all-about/killer-whale/care-of-young/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Childbirth>

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### Role of the Linea Nigra???



http://mumsgrapevine.com.au/site/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/linea-nigra-660x440.jpg


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### Recent Descriptions for Human Infant

- 1987 Ann-Marie Widström (Sweden): ability of the newborn to find and grasp the nipple without maternal participation, in the **first hour of life**
- 1990 Righard & Alade (Sweden): « self-attachment » in the **first hour of life**, if no interruption in skin-to-skin contact → BFHI step 4 
- 1994 Heather Harris (Australia): « co-bathing » successful even after a **few weeks of age** (and even without water)

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### More recently... Beyond Birth

- 2001 Christine Smillie (USA): this instinct exists for **pre-terms and full-terms** infants, probably persisting for at least a year or much longer → 'Baby-Led Breastfeeding, or mother-Baby Dance' 
- 2005 Suzanne Colson (UK): new paradigm: **'Biological Nurturing® - laid back breastfeeding'**.

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## Why Haven't We Noticed This Before?

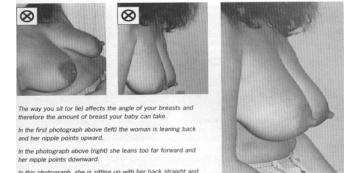
- Poor expectation of infant's competency
  - Common interruption of the beginning of the feeding sequence (cultural inclination to restrain and protect newborn head movements) while attempting to force the end of the sequence (latch)
- Infant anxiety, stress, neurobehavioral disorganization, and LATCHING STRUGGLE

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## Why Haven't We Noticed This Before? (end)

Laid-back postures have been classically discouraged...  
→ ADV. A STRAIGHT BACK!



The way you sit or lie affects the angle of your breasts and therefore the amount of breast your baby can take.  
In the first photograph above (left) the woman is leaning back and her nipple points upward.  
In the photograph above (right) she leans too far forward and her nipple points downward.  
In this photograph, she is sitting up with her back straight and her breast is in good position for the baby to take.

From Renfrew, Fisher, Arms, 'Bestfeeding: how to breastfeed your baby' [2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2000]

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## Biological Nurturing®

- Dr Suzanne Colson (UK), RM, PhD
- More than 35 years of clinical experience with breastfeeding mothers
- Began as a LLL Leader/lactation consultant in France (with Michel Odent) → midwife
- Her PhD thesis (2005): 'The Mechanisms of Biological Nurturing'. Has observed **primitive neonatal reflexes (PNRs)** during feeding (54 mother/infant pairs).



Colson S et al. Early Human Development. 2008; 84(7).

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## PNRs in the Feeding Context

### Endogenous (cues)

Hand to mouth, Mouth gape  
Tongue dart/lick  
★ Arm cycle, Leg cycle  
Finger flexion/extension

### Motor (finding)

Palmar, Plantar grasp  
Stepping, Crawling  
Placing  
Babinski  
Hand/Foot flex

### Rhythmic (sustaining)

Suck  
Jaw jerk  
Swallow

### Anti-Gravity (finding)

★ Head righting  
Head lifting  
Rooting  
Head bobbing

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## PNRs in the Feeding Context (cont.)



From 'Delivery Self-Attachment', Righard & Frantz, 1992)


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### Pondering...

Do you know any newborn reflex with a negative role?

Yes! For example, the arm cycle movement is really annoying!





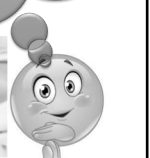


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### Pondering... (end)

BUT reflexes should be helpful for survival!


True: arm cycle, head bobbing reflexes are helpful in the labour room!

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## Biological Nurturing®

- Conclusion of her PhD thesis: “Semi-reclined maternal postures appeared to trigger a greater number of PNRs as feeding stimulants than traditional feeding positions”.
- ‘Biological Nurturing’ (BN) approach: **laid-back posture** (mum’) & **ventral posture** (baby) release **spontaneous behaviours** which facilitates **breastfeeding**.
- **Biological Nurturing = NATURE and CULTURE**




birthinternational.com

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## Biological Nurturing® Philosophy

1. All mothers have an **innate capacity to breastfeed** regardless of having seen other mothers breastfeed when they were children, contact with other breastfeeding mothers, education, type of birth & other cultural-socio-economic factors.




http://www.biologicinnurturing.com/pages/philosophy.html

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## Biological Nurturing® Philosophy (cont.)

2. Like giving birth, innate breastfeeding behaviors appear spontaneously in an environment when the mother’s **lower brain** structures are active & her **thinking brain** is quiet.



http://www.biologicinnurturing.com/pages/philosophy.html

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## Biological Nurturing® Philosophy (cont.)

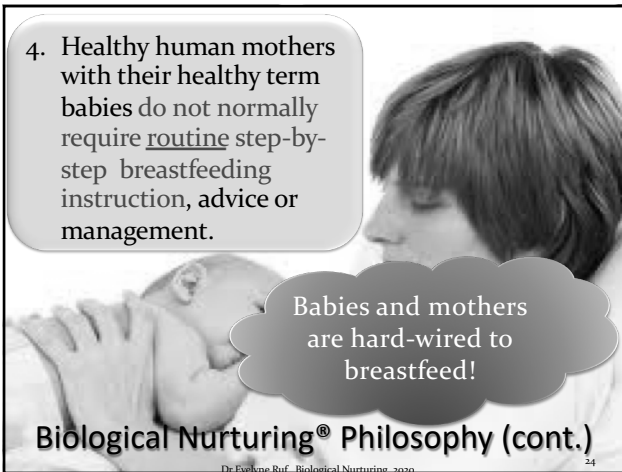
3. Once established, breastfeeding quickly becomes a **right brained** activity of daily living.



http://www.biologicinnurturing.com/pages/philosophy.html

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4. Healthy human mothers with their healthy term babies do not normally require routine step-by-step breastfeeding instruction, advice or management.




Babies and mothers are hard-wired to breastfeed!

**Biological Nurturing® Philosophy (cont.)**

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### Step-by-step BF Instructions

We teach mothers through a 'left-brained' agenda (prescriptive positions, key-points for the latch ...)

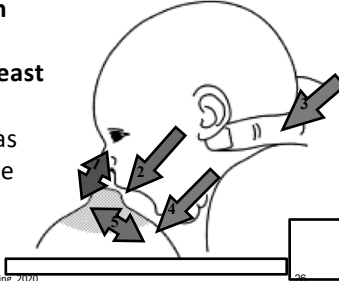
LOGIC		CREATIVITY
ANALYSIS		IMAGINATION
SEQUENCING		HOLISTIC THINKING
LINEAR		INTUITION
MATHEMATICS		ARTS (motor skill)
LANGUAGE		RHYTHM (beats)
FACTS		NON-VERBAL
THINK IN WORDS		VISUALIZATION
WORDS OF SONGS		TUNE OF SONGS
COMPUTATION		DAYDREAMING

teamaltman.com  
ucmas.ca

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### Key-points for a Deep Latch


- 1: **Nose** in front of the nipple
- 2: Wait for a **wide open mouth**
- 3: Bring **baby to the breast**
- 4: with the **chin first**
- 5: and **lower lip** as far as possible from the nipple



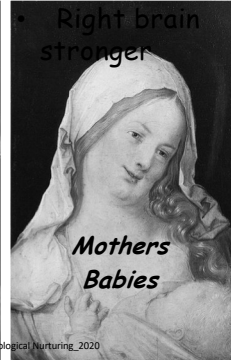
[! Not breast to baby]

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### The Fundamental Confusion...



Left brain stronger  
Health Care Providers



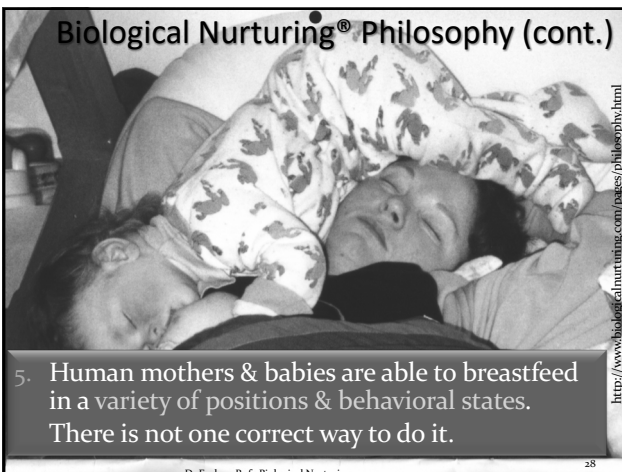
Right brain stronger  
Mothers Babies

Step-by-step teaching

Unknown after Rembrandt - The anatomy lesson Public Domain; Wikimedia commons  
Maria mit dem Kind - Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) Public Domain; Wikimedia commons

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**Biological Nurturing® Philosophy (cont.)**




5. Human mothers & babies are able to breastfeed in a variety of positions & behavioral states. There is not one correct way to do it.

<http://www.biologicialnurturing.com/pages/philosophy.html>


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### Prescriptive Feeding Positions



Breast-Feeding Positions

Classical positions




CRIBBLE  
SLEEPING  
CRADLE  
CROSS CRADLE

http://mushybaby.com.blogspot.com/2012/03/mothers-milk-breastfeeding-101-part-1.html  
©2007 Breastfeeding: A Parent's Guide, Amy Spangler, 7th Edition, Revised 2000.

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### Non-Prescriptive Recipe



Mother chooses the kind of semi-reclined posture she likes


Baby can lie with different angles related to mother's body...

La Leche League International

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### Different Angles Possible

Longitudinal, oblique, transverse\* lies



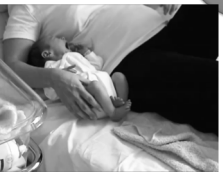
Pictures copyrighted to Suzanne Colson, from the article: Colson S. Maternal breastfeeding positions: have we got it right? (2). *The practising midwife*. 2005; 8 (11).

\* Useful after C/Section

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### Different Angles Possible (end)

Transverse lie



Useful after C/Section

Oblique 'over-the-shoulder' lie



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### Biological Nurturing® Philosophy (cont.)

Mother's body is baby's natural habitat!

6. The newborn has behavioral reflex cues indicating when he needs to be in close contact with his mother.

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### Biological Nurturing® Philosophy (cont.)

7. Biological nurturing positions go with gravity, releasing baby feeding reflexes as stimulants.

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### With Classical Positions: PNRs can be Frustrating

Sitting up, PNRs made latching more difficult

Pull of gravity caused gaps, head-butting, arching away




Photo: Melanie Ham

Side to side

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### Classical Positions: Interventions Needed

From source in slide 31

https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/sleep/settling-routines/newborns-sleep-routines

Baby's reflexive arm movements hindering the feed

Wrapping during feeding

Batman Wrap: leaves infant's body close to his mother

Drawing E. Ruf

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### Classical positions: Interventions needed (cont.)

Restraining the arms

Controlling arm cycling movements

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### Classical positions: Interventions needed (cont.)

From source in slide 31

Gravity is pulling the baby away from mother's breasts

Adding pillows

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### Laid-back BF: no interventions needed

Pillows for the mother only

Gravity keeps baby close to mothers' body

Baby's motor reflexes are helping the feed

Disappearance of arm cycling

Examples of laid-back postures

La Leche League International

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### Biological Nurturing® Philosophy (cont.)

8. The mechanisms of biological nurturing are unrelated to the amount of skin contact between mother & baby.

http://www.biologicannurturing.com/pages/philosophy.html

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### Add-on: No Need to Wake Baby Up!

- “When a dyad has problems, **releasing reflexes** when the baby is **in sleep states** is more effective than waiting for the baby to show interest or hunger.”


Pictures copyrighted to Suzanne Colson, from website

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http://www.biologicannurturing.com/pages/philosophy.html

## Sleep / Awake States for Breastfeeding


- Deep/quiet sleep
- Light/active sleep
- Drowsy
- Quiet alert
- Active alert
- Crying



http://hushbymom.blogspot.com/2012/03/mothers-milk-breastfeeding-101-part-1.html



Drowsy at home



Laid back

Following description from Table 19-5, BF & Human Lactation 5<sup>th</sup> Edition  
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## Mothers & Babies Love It!






Exhausted mother



Pictures copyrighted to Suzanne Colson, from DVD  
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## Mothers & Babies Love It! (end)

High oxytocin pulsatility...






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**Welcome**

**Why Breastfeed?**

**Intro**

**Summary**



**Announcements**

**Suzanne in New York**


**Suzanne in Canada**

**Suzanne's New Book**

Welcome to the Biological Nurturing website... Whether you are a mother-to-be or have...  
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## We Are Convinced...



But how to do it, practically?

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## "Recipe for nurturing"

[www.biologicalnurturing.com]

Non-prescriptive recipe...

**Ingredients**

- ✓ Plenty of pillows
- ✓ 1 healthy mother
- ✓ 1 healthy baby (or 2)
- ✓ Bed or armchair
- ✓ Privacy (optional)




Colson, The Practicing Midwife, 2007, 10(9)  
Photos copyrighted to Suzanne Colson

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### “Recipe for nurturing” (cont.)

- ✓ Layer the first three ingredients on a bed or armchair starting with the pillows, placing your baby tummy down, on top.
- ✓ Sift through your own positions to find the most comfortable.



Photos copyrighted to Suzanne Colson

Colson, The Practising Midwife, 2007. 10(9)

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### “Recipe for nurturing” (cont.)

- ✓ Add skin-to-skin contact, if desired... [...]
- ✓ Stir in the desired amount of privacy.
- ✓ Gently fold in hugs and kisses. Gaze and cuddle. Stroke and whisper. Leave in this warm draught-free place for at least 45 minutes.
- ✓ Check temperature frequently. Do not chill.



Colson, The Practising Midwife, 2007. 10(9)

Photos copyrighted to Suzanne Colson

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### “Recipe for nurturing” (end)

- ✓ As baby nuzzles and latches on and off, no one but you can save how long to savour. [...]
- ✓ Sprinkle with cupfuls of love, laughter and lullabies.



Photos copyrighted to Suzanne Colson

Colson, The Practising Midwife, 2007. 10(9)

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### Biological Nurturing® : A Paradigm Shift for Lactation Clinicians

- Nancy Mohrbacher, IBCLC (USA)
- Author (books, app., videos)



She discovered Suzanne Colson's BN in 2008



Natural Breastfeeding Position, Mohrbacher, video.com

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### ‘Natural Breastfeeding Position’

- Easier name than ‘Biological Nurturing®’
- **First-line** position for the **first 40 days p.p.**
- So **comfortable** that mothers & babies will **love BF**
- So **simple key points** that HCPs will **love guiding** mothers:
  - ✓ ‘Adjust your body’
  - ✓ ‘Adjust your baby’
  - ✓ ‘Adjust your breast’ (optional)



HealthMom.org/top-5-breastfeeding-positions

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## 1. 'Adjust Your Body'

- **Comfortable reclined position:** all body parts relaxed (including the head)
  - **At home:** sofa, armchair, recliner, bed



Printscreens from videos Nancy Mohrbacher

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## 1. 'Adjust Your Body' (cont.)

- **Comfortable reclined position:**
  - **Hospital:** bed (adjustable angle), armchair
  - **Clinic:** recliner, armchair



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Pictures from Lactation Clinic, FHPC SHH

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## 1. 'Adjust Your Body' (end)

- **Comfortable reclined position:**
  - More reclined if large breasts
  - Less reclined when socializing



<http://www.parents.com>

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Print-screen from videos Nancy Mohrbacher

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## 2. 'Adjust Your Baby'

- **Completely facing mother's body** ('frog' position)
  - Ventral surface, arms, knees, feet act as 'GPS'
  - ➔ if these body parts are in contact and stable on mother's body, PRNs are stimulated



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Printscreens from videos Nancy Mohrbacher

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## 2. 'Adjust Your Baby' (cont.)

- **Completely facing mother's body** (cont.)



The 'GPS' parts not touching mother's body → baby is lost

Renfrew, Fisher, Arms, Breastfeeding: how to breastfeed your baby [2nd edition, 2000]

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<http://literally-is-awful.blogspot.ae/2013/07/write-with-party-hat.html>

## 2. 'Adjust Your Baby' (cont.)

- **Completely facing mother's body** (cont.)



From baby flailing to "smooth sailing" (body control)

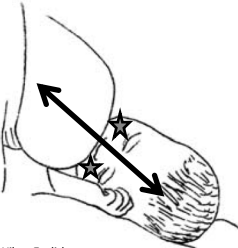
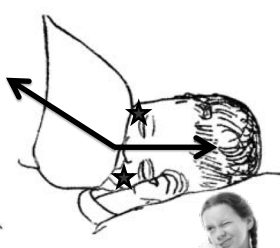
And the mother?

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Printscreens from Videos Nancy Mohrbacher

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## 2. 'Adjust Your Baby' (cont.)






© Hilary English  
**Facing the breast:** both cheeks should be at same distance from the breast (not one close, one far)

Oxford Breastfeeding Clinic  
Picture from Google search several years ago.  
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## 2. 'Adjust Your Baby' (cont.)

- **Facing mother's breast:** ensured by cradling the infant with one arm









And the other arm?

Video & print-screen Nancy/Mehrbacher  
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## 2. 'Adjust Your Baby' (end)

**One arm to cradle the baby, one pillow to support mother's arm.**


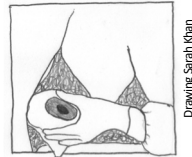



http://www.biologicalnurturing.com/pages/philosophy.html  
Printscreen from video Nancy/Mehrbacher  
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## 3. 'Adjust Your Breast' (Optional)

- **To firm the breast tissue, or shape it as a sandwich (if needed only)**

Parallel to baby's lips

Video and print-screen from Nancy/Mehrbacher  
Drawing Sarah Khan  
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## Natural Breastfeeding Position/ Laid-Back in FHPC Lactation Clinic





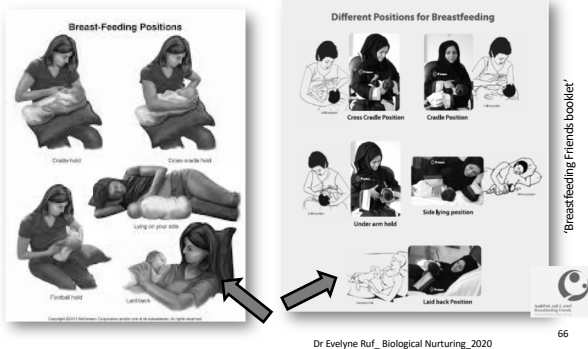
Pictures & video clips from Lactation clinic, SHJ FHPC with written permission  
Dr Evelyne Ruf\_ Biological Nurturing\_2020

## Mothers, Babies & Staff Love It!




Pictures & video clips from Lactation clinic, SHJ FHPC with written permission  
Dr Evelyne Ruf\_ Biological Nurturing\_2020

### Up-Dated Posters/Booklets



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### In Maternity Ward

- For safety purposes, a wrap can secure the baby on top of his mother in laid-back position, so they both can rest.

N-B: When baby shows early hunger cues (even in quiet sleep), the wrap can be loosened to let him attach to the breast.



Practiced in a private Baby-Friendly hospital in Dubai

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<http://www.open.edu/openlearn/create/mof/occontent/view.php?id=342&section=1.7.1>

### Antenatal Preparation



Printscreen from Videos Nancy Mohrbecher

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### Variant: 'Baby-Led Breastfeeding', or 'the Mother-Baby Dance'

- Christina Smillie (USA)
  - Mother and infant naked from the waist
  - Mothers with very moderate laid back posture
  - Calming infant first
- Kittie Frantz (USA)
  - Same first 2 points
  - OK to let infant fuss and be upset



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### Conclusion

- Whatever the name, this 'new' instinctive approach should become our default mode with mothers
- During antenatal preparation
- In maternity wards
- At newborn screening visits
- In a lactation clinic...
- The best 'discovery' in the recent breastfeeding medicine history



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BIOLOGICAL NURTURING,  
or NATURAL BREASTFEEDING POSITION:  
Mothers & Babies (and You) Will Love It!

www.pinterest.com



**Thank You!**

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