

13th Breastfeeding and Feminism International Conference

**The Dance of Nurture in a Complex World:
How biology, gender, and social context shape how we nourish our children**

March 21-23, 2018
Sheraton Hotel, Chapel Hill, NC, USA

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS—DUE OCTOBER 15

Our everyday infant and child feeding and nurturing activities are shaped by gender, customs, the sociopolitical environment, and by the ways lactation, the body, and culture relate. The interaction of all these factors leads to different ways of breastfeeding, nourishing, and nurturing across cultures, communities and populations. As well, infant feeding practices beyond breastfeeding, such as chestfeeding and human milk expression, use, donation, sharing, and selling are all activities that expand the diversity of infant feeding practices that we see in the world today. These different practices carry multiple meanings in different contexts and entail different types of negotiations, compromises and trade-offs. Some may experience pain and other difficulties, alongside the pleasure, that come from using their body to care for another. Some are challenged by trying to breastfeed in a context shaped by systems of gender inequality that ignore the complexity of embodied, gendered nurture. Some experience challenges related to negotiating the right and ability to nourish and nurture in a context of racism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination. Furthermore, the diversity of infant feeding practices complicates the ways the breastfeeding community thinks about the maternal-infant dyad, speaks to the significance of breastfeeding apart from the value of human milk, and develops approaches to supporting all those who nourish and nurture infants and young children.

At BFIC 2018 we will explore the diversity of experiences and activities related to breastfeeding, chestfeeding, human milk feeding and nurturing. We seek to examine (1) the role of biology, the body, gender, customs, and social context in shaping those experiences, (2) the meanings, complications, pleasures, and significance of different practices and activities in different contexts (3) innovative approaches to supporting caregivers; and (4) social justice, reproductive justice, health equity, and rights approaches to supporting all those who nourish and nurture infants and young children.

We welcome abstracts on research, advocacy, policy, and practices that address:

- The experiences of those who use their body to nourish infants and young children in different cultures, communities, and populations around the world
- Experiences with milk sharing – as giver, recipient, health care provider, or policy maker
- Experiences from adoptive parents, surrogates, cross-nursing, LGBTQ+ parents, new and acculturated immigrants, and those who exclusively pump
- How bodily (dis)ability affects feeding practices
- Feminist, gendered, cultural, and biopsychosocial perspectives – both theoretical and practical - on the practice of feeding and nurturing, and on the breast
- Experiences navigating feeding and nurturing alongside racism, heterosexism, sexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of prejudice and discrimination

- The corporeal and/or cerebral experiences of feeding
- Pain and/or pleasures of breastfeeding, including nursing aversion
- How (different) feeding practices constrain and/or liberate the caregiver
- The role of pumping, hand expression, formula, bottles and other feeding devises, and teats in feeding practices
- Using caregivers' experiences to inform research, practices, policies, and systems that enable the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding, chestfeeding, or other forms of human milk feeding
- Innovative approaches to addressing the challenges of feeding (such as pain, sleep, milk supply, guilt, and challenges navigating work, public spaces, poverty, and injustices)
- Innovative approaches to developing customs, communities or programs that can better support lactation and caregivers,
- Social and reproductive justice, health equity, and rights approaches to supporting all those who feed and nurture infants and young children.
- Practices surrounding, and the ethics of, “nontraditional” uses of human milk (i.e., not for feeding infants and young children).

BY OCTOBER 15, 2017 we invite you to submit an abstract of 300-500 words containing:

1. Your name, affiliation, and contact information including email and phone number
2. Your preference for a panel presentation, a discussion-based session, a workshop, or a poster session. We consider but cannot guarantee your preference.

Send your abstract as a word document via email to BFIC@uncg.edu with the subject line: “BFIC 2018 Abstract”

Types of presentations

- **PANEL:** A 15-minute presentation as part of a plenary panel—each panel has 2-3 speakers with discussion to follow all presentations. Presenters will have access to LCD to present in PowerPoint.
- **DISCUSSION SESSION:** Discussion sessions are of two types: 60-minute sessions with several presenters; and 30-minute single presenter sessions. We will have multiple concurrent discussion sessions. The format for these sessions is ‘facilitated and engaged discussion’. We recommend that each presenter share for 10 minutes followed by open discussion. Presenters will not have access to projectors or screens.
- **WORKSHOP:** During these 60-minute interactive sessions presenters will focus on the “how to” and the “skills for”. While one hour is not sufficient for people to become facile at a new skill, we envision that the audience will come away with a better understanding or appreciation of the topic and what their next steps might be. Participants could also work together on a common task and/or agree to continue to collaborate after the conference.
- **POSTER:** Posters may be displayed in the dining hall for the duration of the symposium. We will have a formal viewing/discussion during the reception on Wednesday evening.