

# AGE-APPROPRIATE HUMAN MILK FEEDING EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

## GUIDING VISION

From early childhood through high school graduation, students develop a progressively deeper understanding of human milk feeding—beginning with normalization and care, building to biological understanding, and culminating in critical thinking, practical knowledge, and advocacy.

Human milk feeding education should progress from normalization and exposure in early childhood to biological understanding in upper elementary, critical thinking in middle school, and applied knowledge and advocacy in high school.

This progression reflects both developmental readiness and public health goals, aligning with [Michigan Health Education Standards Guidelines 2025](#) and [MIBFN Education Policy Priorities](#).

## THESE PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE EMBEDDED AT ALL LEVELS:

### **NORMALIZATION & DE-SEXUALIZATION**

Present breastfeeding as a standard biological function, not taboo.

### **REPRESENTATION & INCLUSION**

Reflect diverse races, cultures, body types, and gender identities.

### **FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Reinforce shared responsibility and encourage at-home conversations.

### **RESPECT FOR THE HUMAN BODY**

Build a lifelong understanding of bodies as functional, capable, and worthy of care.

### **SPIRALED LEARNING**

Concepts are revisited with increasing depth and complexity over time.

### **CONNECTION ACROSS DOMAINS**

Integration of biology, culture, media, and lived experience.



GRADE LEVEL	FOCUS	WHAT STUDENTS LEARN	INSTRUCTIONAL APPROACHES	KEY OUTCOMES
<b>Pre-K (Ages 3-5)</b>	Normalization, caregiving, and representation through play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Babies need food to grow</li> <li>Some babies drink milk from a parent's body</li> <li>Feeding is part of caring and nurturing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Read-alouds and visuals showing diverse families feeding babies (including breastfeeding)</li> <li>Dramatic play with dolls, carriers, and feeding scenarios (bottle and breastfeeding)</li> <li>Simple, neutral language ("Some babies drink milk from their parent's body")</li> <li>Classroom environments that reflect diverse cultures, bodies, and identities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Breastfeeding is understood as normal, caring behavior—not hidden or unusual</li> <li>Early foundation for respectful, non-sexualized understanding of bodies</li> </ul>
<b>Lower Elementary (K-2)</b>	Foundational nutrition and introduction to human milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food supports growth and health</li> <li>Babies have different nutritional needs</li> <li>Human milk is a normal, healthy food for babies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nutrition units including "What do babies eat?" alongside broader food groups</li> <li>Sorting and matching activities by age (baby/child/adult foods)</li> <li>Early science connections (humans as mammals; bodies can make food for babies)</li> <li>Inclusive classroom discussions of feeding without judgment</li> <li>Family engagement (home conversations about infant feeding, framed inclusively)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human milk is recognized as a standard, healthy form of infant nutrition</li> <li>Caregiving and feeding are understood as shared family roles</li> </ul>
<b>Upper Elementary (Grades 3-5)</b>	Body literacy, early biology, and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bodies change during puberty</li> <li>Breasts/chests have a biological function (milk production)</li> <li>Hormones play a role in body processes</li> <li>Families feed babies in different ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Puberty education including functional understanding of breast/chest development</li> <li>Introductory hormone concepts and how the body produces milk</li> <li>Science connections (humans as mammals; milk production as biological adaptation)</li> <li>Discussions of cultural practices and historical context</li> <li>Media exploration (how infant feeding is represented in books/TV)</li> <li>Use of inclusive, accurate language (breastfeeding/chestfeeding)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milk production is understood as a normal biological function</li> <li>Early stigma reduction through knowledge and representation</li> </ul>
<b>Middle School (Grades 6-8)</b>	Critical thinking, stigma reduction, and social context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infant feeding is shaped by social, cultural, and economic factors</li> <li>Breastfeeding is often stigmatized or misunderstood</li> <li>Feeding decisions are personal and influenced by context</li> <li>Individuals deserve respect and autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deeper exploration of human development, lactation basics, and infant nutrition</li> <li>Discussions on stigma (e.g., discomfort with public breastfeeding)</li> <li>Examination of systemic influences (marketing, inequities, cultural norms)</li> <li>Student-centered projects (campaigns, posters, videos)</li> <li>Cultural comparisons of infant feeding practices</li> <li>Introduction to rights (e.g., feeding in public)</li> <li>Inclusion of diverse identities and family structures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can critically analyze perceptions and biases around human milk feeding</li> <li>Increased empathy and respect for diverse feeding experiences</li> </ul>
<b>High School (Grades 9-12)</b>	Practical knowledge, life skills, and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anatomy and physiology of lactation (hormones, supply/demand)</li> <li>Benefits for parent and baby</li> <li>Realistic expectations and common challenges</li> <li>Legal rights and workplace/school protections</li> <li>Ways to support others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integration into health, biology, and sex education curricula</li> <li>Case studies (e.g., teen parenting and breastfeeding in school)</li> <li>Health topics (mastitis, latch issues, when to seek help)</li> <li>Balanced education on formula (safety, risks, without "ease" bias)</li> <li>Legal literacy (public feeding laws, pumping rights)</li> <li>Media literacy (analysis of representation and omission)</li> <li>Career exploration (IBCLCs, peer counselors, public health roles)</li> <li>Guest speakers and community partnerships</li> <li>Applied learning (advocacy campaigns, peer education)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students gain actionable, real-world knowledge</li> <li>Human milk feeding is understood as a health, rights, and societal issue</li> </ul>