

Forward Together: Stories from our Breastfeeding Peer Counselors

Andrea's Story

What made you want to become a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor?

I had no idea about what a peer counselor was. I was getting calls as a former WIC participant. I was asked if I wanted to become a peer counselor. What I remember as a first-time mom and struggling with breastfeeding, specifically latching, was I appreciated the calls. The calls kept me going and made me try even harder with breastfeeding. After the opportunity presented itself, I thought that if I could do it, I knew I could encourage other moms. I LOVE it! I have encouraged many moms in my family, at my church, in my community, and even total strangers to breastfeed. It is nothing for me to see a mom at an event breastfeeding and pop up with a bottle of water and say, "Remember, you gotta stay hydrated."



What motivates you to keep providing breastfeeding peer counseling services?

My motivation is that after talking to 20 moms, if I can convince one to breastfeed, it makes me feel like a job well done. I come across all kinds of moms—young, teenagers, and seasoned moms. Some are strong-minded, and after I talk for a while, most will say, "Okay, I'll try it." Sometimes, you simply have to meet people where they are and get on their level. Every day is a challenge; that challenge motivates me.

Who was there for you as a new breastfeeding mom? How did they help?

As a former breastfeeding mom, I had a great support system. Not only did I have a private insurance provider that had a nurse checking in on me weekly, but I also had WIC encouraging me and helping me with my challenges. I had a difficult time getting my first baby to latch. I used a nipple shield. One day, I was sitting in the room, preparing to nurse her, and my husband came in and sat with me. When she latched on with the aid of the nipple shield, he removed it, and she latched on to me. It was the most amazing feeling. After that, it was smooth sailing. I exclusively breastfed her for 18 months. I exclusively breastfed my second baby for 1 year and my last baby for 13 months. My last baby was jaundiced. I was told to formula feed. A nurse came in and said, "You are doing great with the breastfeeding. Just keep breastfeeding her; it may take a little longer but keep breastfeeding her." She was so right. I continued to exclusively breastfeed my baby, and she turned out perfect. I can only hope other moms experience what I have experienced during my breastfeeding journey.



Want to support other moms? **Join our team!**
We're hiring compassionate, dedicated individuals
who want to make a difference. Learn more at
alabamapublichealth.gov/wic/breastfeeding.html.

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