Speaking in many tongues

How the laid-back mother facilitates the baby-led breast crawl to self-attachment,

Oh my!

Christina M. Smillie, MD, FAAP, IBCLC, FABM
Stratford, Connecticut, USA

What babies know

And what the rest of us are trying to figure out

Western perspective

- Video
  - Widström, 1987
  - Breastfeeding is Baby’s Choice
- Publication

Western perspective

- Meyer, 1999
- Colson, 2008, DVD
- Smillie, 2008, DVD
- Gangal, 2010, UNICEF India, video

Colson SD, Mark JM, Hawdon JM. Optimal position for the release of primitive neonatal reflexes stimulation breastfeeding. Early Hum Dev 2008; 84(7):411-44
Western perspective
• Brazelton
• Klaus
• Amiel-Tison & Grenier
• Glover
• Schore

Language
• Baby takes the breast
• Mother gives breast
• The mammalian feeding sequence
• Attachment, latch
• Infant self-attachment
• Baby-led latch, baby-led feeding
• Breast crawl
• Laid-back breastfeeding, biological nurturing
• Baby takes the breast

The blind men and the elephant....

The neurobehavioral cascade
“The mammalian feeding sequence”
Tactile stimulus
Chest, abdomen
Cheek
Chin
Oral mucosa
Palate

Cascade of behaviors
Search, step, crawl
Root
Open, reach, grasp
Suckle
Sustain suckling

Other mammals
• The macaque monkey
• The newborn rat
• The newborn wallaby
• Kittens, puppies, giraffes

Western Birth
• Separating mothers and babies
• Anesthesia
• Presumption of incompetence
• Then, Leboyer and Odent
• Brazelton and Klaus

Baby “takes” the breast
Midwives
Earlier books: courtesy of Diane Weissinger
1958 – The womanly art of breastfeeding
La Leche League International
Whether you sit up or lie down while you nurse him is up to you. Whichever position you find most comfortable is best for you. Don’t try to shove the nipple into his mouth. Rest his cheek against it and he’ll turn his head towards it and latch on.
1981 – The womanly art of breastfeeding, 3rd edition  LLLI

As you and your baby get settled, talk to him or just make those little cooing noises that mothers and babies understand so well.

1981 – The womanly art of breastfeeding, 3rd edition  LLLI

Next…. The baby will turn toward any pressure on his face, a reflex that you want working with you. ....So relax, and do nothing more than touch his cheek with your nipple, assuring him all the while that he will do very well at nursing, as he most certainly will.

1991 – The womanly art of breastfeeding  La Leche League International

The following steps explain the correct way to position your baby at the breast in order to ensure that baby sucks well and gets plenty of milk and also to prevent nipple soreness and pain.
1. Position yourself properly. ....Sit up ....Pillows are a must....
2. Position your baby properly.... Baby should be .....  
3. Offer your breast to the baby. Cup your breast ...Your thumb and index finger should form a “C”. Be sure your fingers are ......
4. Encourage baby to latch on properly......
[There are 3 more numbered steps that cover recognizing effective sucking, dealing with pain, correcting an incorrect latch. Descriptions of and instructions for other breastfeeding positions follow.]

2004 – The womanly art of breastfeeding, 7th edition  LLLI

1. Position yourself properly. ....Sit up bed.... Pillows are a must....
2. Position your baby properly.... Baby’s ear, shoulder, and hip should be in a straight line. His head should be in line with his body...Hold the baby at the level of your nipple....
3. Offer your breast to the baby. Your thumb and index finger should form a “C” or “U” .... Support the breast as close to its natural height as possible while the baby latches on and throughout the feeding, with your thumb in line with the baby’s nose and four fingers on the other side of the breast...
4. Encourage baby to latch on properly.... Encourage the baby to open his mouth wide by moving him toward and away from the breast, touching his lips lightly and repeating until baby opens wide. Baby’s mouth should be open really wide, like a yawn, as he latches on. 
5. ..... 

2004 – The womanly art of breastfeeding, 7th edition  LLLI

5. ..... 
[There are 5 more numbered steps that cover encouraging baby to suck effectively, avoiding nipple soreness or pain, watching for effective sucking patterns, and finishing the first breast first.
These are followed by an explanation of when to use a “C” and when to use a “U”, and other breastfeeding positions, with a reminder to “follow these procedures carefully at first”.]

Baby “takes” the breast

Michel Odent


Swedish researchers
Widström: Aren’t babies clever?


Righard: Self-attachment


Harris: Co-bathing


Matt & Mandy

The newbie

- 1996 observations
- Discussions with others

Kangaroo care for full-terms

- Kathleen Meyer


Our video

Smillie: Mother-baby dance  Frantz: Self-attachment

© 2013 CM Smillie MD
Keys

• Rebecca Glover
  – Postural and positional stability
  – “Instinctive position”

• Karolinska researchers
  – Olfactory and other neurosensory cues
  – Hunger—physiologic drop in blood sugar
  – Thirst—vasopressin and serum osmolality
  – Undisrupted interactions

Keys

Infant competence—
  Brazelton, Klaus
Infant state — Prechtl and Wolf
Schore, mother co-regulates infant state
Right-brained thinking
Amiel-Tison & Grenier

Interpretations: motherbaby

• Geographic differences in emphasis
• Emphasis on mother or baby or both
• Self-attachment and the “dead mother”
• Right-brained interactive dance—
  – baby-led, mother responds
• Mother-speed
  – mother-led, baby responds

Colson: Biological Nurturing™

• Earlier papers
• PhD thesis:

Colson’s research

Qualitative and exploratory
Postures and positions
Biological nurturing position: baby
Biological nurturing posture: semi-reclined
Minimal instructions to mother
Colson’s findings and conclusions

- Human infants: Dorsal vs ventral (or frontal) feeder—the importance of gravity in facilitating or interfering with infant behaviors
- Her cultural environment—the “dead mother”
- Sees neonatal behavior as primarily reflexive, bringing out maternal instincts
- As midwife, emphasis on mother

Putting Biological Nurturing™ in context

- Laid-back mother
  - Relaxed position: oxytocin
  - Opens up lap
  - Empowered by infant competence
- Infant stability-postural and state organization
  - Gravity keeps infant in close contact
- Right-brained behaviors
- Infant competence

The breast crawl

- Gangal, UNICEF India
  - BPNI Maharashtra
- The setting
- Why all the people?

The blind men and the elephant

- Who’s doing what?
  - Mother?
  - Baby?
  - Both?
- Reflexes and responses
  - Simple and complex behaviors
  - Mother
  - Baby
- Mother latches baby
- Self-attachment
- Breast crawl
- Biological nurturing™
- Mother-baby interaction: Mother-baby dance

Just the beginning

- The biologists
- Early midwives
- Odent, 1977
- Widström, 1987
- Rigard and Alade, 1990
- Harris, 1994
- Meyer, 1999
- Gangal, 2007
- Smillie, 2008
- Colson, 2008
- Brazelton
- Klaus
- Amiel-Tison & Grenier
- Glover
- Schore

2010 – The womanly art of breastfeeding, 8th edition LLLI

...just find a totally comfortable way to cuddle together so that you’re completely supported – head, neck, shoulders, body – by whatever you’re leaning back against, and she’s completely supported by your body, or perhaps also by the bedding around you.

The blind men and the elephant....
Your baby might start searching for your breast almost immediately, or she might be a little shocked to find herself outside her warm, wet home of the past nine months...After a while, she may lift her head (look how strong she is!) and bob her face on and off your skin... You can help her move closer to the breast or support her as she finds her way. She's doing all this by feel and by smell, not sight, and she welcomes having you share in her efforts. You don't need to be skilled; fumbling is a normal -- even helpful! -- part of the process.

At some point, when her face is near your nipple, she'll lift her head, open her mouth wide, latch on and begin to suck. She's breastfeeding!