



INSPIRING MOMS TO BREASTFEED

An Innovative Strategy for Advancing
the National Breastfeeding Goals

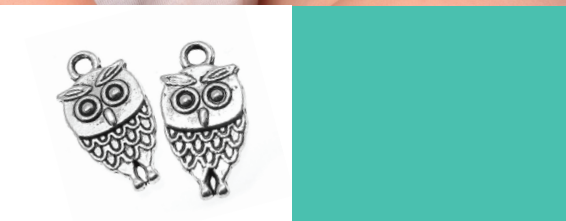


Did you know that 8 out of 10 U.S. moms start to breastfeed? They know that breastfeeding is best for their babies, and, simply put, they want to be good moms. But despite their good intentions, only 3 out of 10 moms breastfeed for 1 year. And only 2 out of 10 moms breastfeed exclusively for 6 months.



This project is designed to give moms the tools they need—knowledge, support, wisdom, patience, and more—not only to initiate, but also to continue, breastfeeding. Each tool is characterized by a charm.

The first three charms provide inspiration and are given to moms during pregnancy. The remaining five charms provide ongoing motivation and are given to moms when they reach specific breastfeeding milestones.



Through these tangible symbols, moms will be reminded of the powerful qualities they already possess and of what they need to do to achieve their breastfeeding goals.

This project will not only help moms achieve their personal breastfeeding goals, but also advance the national breastfeeding goals established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a means of improving the nation's health.





Project Overview

You will give each mom-to-be a charm bracelet with a single charm attached during her first trimester of pregnancy. The charm bracelet marks the start of her breastfeeding journey, and the charm, a book, reminds her to learn all she can about breastfeeding before her baby is born and to share her knowledge with those closest to her.

During her second and third trimesters, you will give each mom-to-be a second and third charm, a tree of life and an owl. These first three charms are designed to inspire her to breastfeed—“You can do this.”

The remaining charms acknowledge an essential quality or attribute moms will need in order to achieve their personal breastfeeding goals. Moms will receive the charms when they reach clearly defined national breastfeeding goals—breastfeed at birth, breastfeed exclusively for 3 months, breastfeed for 6 months, breastfeed exclusively for 6 months, and breastfeed for 12 months.

Counseling Guidelines

Familiarize yourself with each charm and attribute so that you can fully convey their meaning to each mom-to-be. Research shows that emotion-based materials have the greatest impact when health care providers discuss their importance with the client—e.g., the need for knowledge, patience, and support.

Encourage every mom-to-be to participate in the project. Even if she states that she is not planning to breastfeed, urge her throughout her pregnancy to take the congratulations card, charm bracelet, and first three charms along with their motivational messages.



The Ad Council has long been a leader when it comes to “Inspiring change and improving lives,” with memorable campaign slogans such as “A mind is a terrible thing to waste,” “Your brain on drugs,” and “Only you can prevent forest fires.” Ad Council campaigns are among the most successful public health initiatives, due in large part to their reliance on emotion—the strongest form of persuasion.

Breastfeeding initiatives are no exception. Knowledge alone won’t convince a mother to breastfeed. And since moms often decide how they’re going to feed their babies long before their babies are born, it’s never too early to inspire them to breastfeed, or to give them the confidence, determination, and strength they will need to succeed.

Moms who worry that they won’t be able to breastfeed may be inspired and reassured by a new slogan, “Breastfeeding may seem hard at first, but once you learn it’s easy.”



Project Components

Knowledge. During the first prenatal visit, you will give each mom-to-be a white organza drawstring bag containing a congratulations card, a charm bracelet, and a single charm—a book—along with its inspirational message. The charm serves as a reminder to the mom-to-be to learn all she can about breastfeeding before her baby is born, and to share her knowledge with those closest to her. Provide the mom with trusted educational materials—e.g., recommendations on books, videos, and links to websites.

Support and Wisdom. During her second and third trimesters, you will give each mom-to-be two additional charms, a tree of life and an owl, highlighting the need for support and wisdom. Ask the mom-to-be to identify who will help her after her baby is born. Provide her with a list of professional resources—e.g., breastfeeding helpline, lactation consultant, and peer counselor. Ask the mom-to-be if she has thought about her personal breastfeeding goals and whether she is aware of the nation's breastfeeding goals. Remind her that any amount of breastfeeding is beneficial. In other words, while more is better than less, some is better than none.

Patience. Following the birth of her baby, you will give each mom a bicycle charm celebrating the start of breastfeeding and reminding her of the importance of patience as she and her baby learn to breastfeed. Let the mom know that breastfeeding, like learning to ride a bicycle, may seem hard at first, but once she and her baby learn, breastfeeding will be easy!

Persistence. A turtle charm rewards persistence and will be given to those moms who breastfeed *exclusively* for 3 months. Make sure the mom knows that this is a milestone only 4 in 10 mothers achieve.









Strength. You will give moms who continue to breastfeed for 6 months an elephant charm signifying strength. Discuss the fact that continuing to breastfeed creates a bond between a mother and her baby that is truly unbreakable—a bond that will stand the test of time.

Determination. You will give a charm representing determination and engraved with the words “never never give up!” to moms who breastfeed *exclusively* for 6 months. The words will acknowledge the mom's determination and encourage her to continue breastfeeding.

Love. Last but not least, you will give a final charm, a wrapped present, to each mom who breastfeeds for 1 year. The wrapped present serves as a reminder of the gift she has given her baby—one that only a mother can give—a gift of love that lasts forever.



Project Components and Timeline/Milestone for Giving Charms to Moms

	Charm	Quality	Message	Timeline/ Milestone
	Book	Knowledge	Learn all that you can about breastfeeding before your baby is born, and share this knowledge with those closest to you.	Given to all moms during their 1st trimester of pregnancy
	Tree of life	Support	Breastfeeding benefits everyone who is a part of your baby's life. Now is the time to let family and friends know how much you need their support as you learn to breastfeed.	Given to all moms during their 2nd trimester of pregnancy
	Owl	Wisdom	Choose wisely. While breastfeeding may not seem the <i>right</i> choice for every parent, it is the <i>best</i> choice for every baby.	Given to all moms during their 3rd trimester of pregnancy
	Bicycle	Patience	Learning to breastfeed is like learning to ride a bicycle—it takes patience and practice. Even though breastfeeding may seem hard at first, once you learn, it's easy.	Given to moms who initiate breastfeeding
	Turtle	Persistence	Remember that breastfeeding is a marathon, not a sprint. Relax, take a deep breath, and keep a steady pace.	Given to moms who breastfeed exclusively for 3 months
	Elephant	Strength	Never underestimate the strength of a mom. By continuing to breastfeed, you have built a bond with your baby that is unbreakable.	Given to moms who breastfeed for 6 months
	"never never give up!"	Determination	By believing in yourself, you have given your baby the best nutrition available—your milk. Now that's determination!	Given to moms who breastfeed exclusively for 6 months
	Wrapped present	Love	Congratulations on reaching the 1-year mark. You have given your baby a gift that only a mother can give—a gift of love that lasts forever.	Given to moms who breastfeed for 12 months