

Dads and Infant Feeding Workshop:
West Midlands National Breastfeeding Week event,
The Public, Sandwell,
22 June 2010

There were 5 participants at the workshop all of whom were fathers:

18 year old with 2 children

20 year old and 1 child

21 year old Youth Worker and 1 child

30 year old Youth Worker and 2 children

One 25 year old and 1 child

One 35 year old and 1 child

All of the fathers partners tried to breastfeed, found it difficult and all formula fed within a few days / weeks.

Everyone had experience of limited breastfeeding.

All had been actively involved with supporting breastfeeding and bottle feeding.

“It was a relief when she started on the formula because she had been so upset and uncomfortable breastfeeding and was quite confused with the advice she got. I enjoyed it (parenting) more after that because that difficult situation had been resolved and you were less worried.”

Qu. posed “It’s nice because the dad can feed as well – that is the common view.”

The young dads challenged this view saying that you think it’s going to be nice bottle feeding the baby and it is the first time or so, but it becomes just another chore.

Three of the participants had been to a new birthing centre and their worker showed them round, but they did not think it was an environment where they felt it was ‘for them.’

When they started drawing bottles as soon as they started discussing breastfeeding and infant feeding, they were asked how come?

They felt detached from the whole process of feeding until the formula was introduced.

Making up the bottles was largely left for them to do because their partners didn’t seem to want to do it. Their partners seemed grudging about wanting to make up feeds - as if the women resented doing it. This left them with no choice but to largely make up the bottles which they also resented doing as it is a boring and tiresome task which they hated.

They also felt left out of control and resented bottle feeding as it was not their choice of feeding method but the last resort. Feedback on the dads and breastfeeding workshop, Cameron Galt, Community Artist / Workshop tutor, July 2010.