



La Leche League New Zealand Inc.

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Book Review

Mothering Your Nursing Toddler

By Norma Jane Bumgarner

LLLI, revised edition, January 2000

Adapted from *New Beginnings*, Vol. 18 No. 4 July-August 2001, p. 139

Mothers who have treasured the humour and encouragement in the previous edition of *Mothering Your Nursing Toddler* will look forward to reading the updated version, which is nearly twice as long as the original. Although breastfeeding toddlers haven't changed much, the amount of research and information available has. Bumgarner has added to the book from her own experiences and those of other breastfeeding mothers.

The new edition includes many stories from mothers who read Norma Jane Bumgarner's original book and wrote to tell her how it influenced them. It was inspiring to read of so many women who planned to wean naturally, or who felt encouraged and supported to breastfeed into the second, third, or fourth year or beyond. These personal stories show how each nursing couple is unique. Nursing toddlers are all different - they have different personalities, different nursing styles, and will wean at different ages.

The other main difference between earlier editions and the new edition is that there is so much more research available for interpretation. Katherine Dettwyler's extensive research is quoted frequently. Chapter five, "Glimpses of Other Times and Cultures," has been greatly expanded. The subject of "Pregnancy and Tandem Nursing" has been given its own chapter. "Still Best for Your Child," about why breastfeeding is important for the toddler, is updated to reflect more recent thoughts on nutrition. This includes research on iron in the baby's diet: "most well-born nursing babies (70 to 90 percent) have no need for sources of iron in the diet for nine months to a year." The whole chapter was encouraging, giving sensible guidelines on nutrition and the nursing toddler. The most recent research into tooth decay in nursing toddlers is also included in this chapter.

There were more amusing cartoons to enjoy, and also a few photographs. The front cover shows a photograph of a pretty young mother feeding her toddler.

What really impressed me was that in spite of all the additional research and mothers' stories, Norma Jane Bumgarner's original text still holds true. Writing as a La Leche League Leader back in 1980, her thoughts and instincts about nursing toddlers are still being quoted and are helpful to mothers today. This isn't because La Leche League hasn't moved on or updated its image, but because Leaders back then were forward thinking, and followed their "children and not the calendar." By watching their children, La Leche League mothers knew what they needed. Further research and a wider pool of nursing mothers have confirmed that mothers the world over have similar concerns, and their children have similar needs.

This classic book is recommended for those who think that they will be breastfeeding a toddler soon, are breastfeeding a toddler or older child, and those who enjoy reading about parenting styles.

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