

# THE BREASTFEEDING TENT

## PILOT PROJECT AT LONDON INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S ARTS FESTIVAL

PROCESS EVALUATION  
OCTOBER 2007

### KEY POINTS

- *The Breastfeeding Tent* initiative was the first of its kind implemented by the Middlesex-London Health Unit in June 2007. The tent is one component of a comprehensive social marketing plan intended to increase awareness of the importance of breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding and to increase awareness of current recommendations regarding exclusive breastfeeding and duration.
- A total of eight mothers used the tent to breastfeed their infants over the course of the four-day event. In addition, four mothers used the tent to change their baby's diapers, and a total of six support people (i.e. friends, spouses) accompanied mothers and infants to the tent. There were an additional 14 people who came into the tent area either to ask the PHN questions about infant feeding, or make comments about the tent.
- Participants expressed very positive opinions about the tent initiative, and indicated that the tent offered both a supportive and pleasant environment. Feedback from event participants also indicated that *The Breastfeeding Tent* provided a visual reminder to the public that breastfeeding in public spaces is encouraged and supported.
- The role of PHNs in staffing the tent was an important component of the initiative because of the opportunities to provide both public education and awareness.
- Areas for improvement in future tent initiatives were identified by participants and staff, including suggestions for the tent structure and location, event planning, staffing and staff training, promotion, and evaluation.

### BACKGROUND

Health Canada promotes breastfeeding as the best method of feeding infants as it provides optimal nutritional, immunological and emotional benefits for the growth and development of infants (Health Canada, 1999). In 2004, Health Canada drafted new guidelines on infant feeding based on the recommendations from the World Health Organization (WHO). The Exclusive Breastfeeding Duration – 2004 Health Canada recommendation states: "Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first six months of life for healthy term infants, as breast milk is the best food for optimal growth. Infants should be introduced to nutrient-rich, solid food with particular attention to iron at six months with continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond."

Some key findings about local breastfeeding practices indicated that in 2004, 90% of mothers residing in Middlesex-London initiated breastfeeding (Middlesex-London Health Unit, 2005). Of these women, only 44.1% continued to breastfeed for the recommended six months or longer. The Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines (Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 1997) objective to increase to 50% the proportion of infants breastfed up to six months by the year 2010 has not yet been met. The guidelines also state that each board of health shall promote and support breastfeeding through advocating for and assisting in the development of policies to support breastfeeding in the workplace, restaurants, shopping malls and other public places.

In an effort to support Health Canada's recommendation and the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, the Middlesex-London Health Unit, Family Health Promotion Team is implementing strategies to promote and advocate for social support so women feel comfortable breastfeeding in malls, restaurants, the workplace, and other public places. Ultimately, activities and efforts would lead to breastfeeding becoming a cultural norm in Middlesex-London and positively influence both initiation and duration rates.

*The Breastfeeding Tent* is one initiative intended to encourage and support mothers to breastfeed in public places, particularly

outdoor events. The plan for this activity was adapted from Peel Public Health where the Breastfeeding Advocacy Group in Family Health implemented their initiative called *A Breastfeeding Place* in 2003. The MLHU Breastfeeding Tent is one component of a comprehensive social marketing plan intended to increase awareness of the importance of breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding and to increase awareness of current recommendations regarding exclusive breastfeeding and duration.

### GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATIVE

The ultimate goal of *The Breastfeeding Tent* is to work towards making breastfeeding the cultural norm in Middlesex-London. \*

The following are the objectives of the initiative: \*

- To provide a supportive and pleasant environment for breastfeeding mothers and families
- To provide a visual reminder to the public that breastfeeding is encouraged and supported.

\*Adapted from Peel Public Health, "*The Breastfeeding Place*" initiative

### DESCRIPTION OF THE TENT INITIATIVE

For this pilot project, a gazebo structure was purchased from Canadian Tire. The tent was 10 feet by 10 feet. This "tent" consisted of a solid panel for the roof, one solid wall at the back of the tent, and consisted of three mesh walls with an opening for the entrance. The tent was furnished with chairs and carpeting, an infant change station, an information and resource table, and toys and activities for siblings to engage in while mother was breastfeeding. Bottled water and comfort items for mothers and infants were also available. The tent was staffed by a Public Health Nurse (PHN) throughout the event, and a volunteer on one day. The tent provided mothers with a place to breastfeed their infants, change their infant's diapers,

gather information on breastfeeding, and/or speak directly to a PHN about infant feeding practices.

A banner was hung on one panel of the tent to promote the general communication campaign message: “Breastfeeding Protects...how can you protect breastfeeding? Encourage moms to continue breastfeeding and to feel comfortable breastfeeding anywhere.”

---

---

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

---

---

*The Breastfeeding Tent* was piloted at the 4-day children’s festival held in downtown London, called the London International Children’s Arts Festival (herein referred to as the Children’s Festival). Since 1991, this festival has provided opportunities for children to experience performances and activities organized by international, national and local artists, including music, drama, visual, dance and literary arts (London International Children’s Arts Festival, 2007). Each year the festival has over 20,000 visitors. The event took place on June 6<sup>th</sup> through June 9<sup>th</sup> in 2007.

---

---

## PURPOSES OF THE EVALUATION

---

---

There were three main purposes of the evaluation:

- To assess participant satisfaction levels with *The Breastfeeding Tent*.
- To track the human and financial resources required to operate *The Breastfeeding Tent*.
- To monitor implementation of *The Breastfeeding Tent* initiative and to identify successes and challenges to inform future planning.

---

---

## METHODOLOGY

---

---

There were two data collection tools developed for this process evaluation, including a participant feedback form and a tool for PHN tracking. These two forms and the methodology are described below.

Participants who came into *The Breastfeeding Tent* and either used the facility to feed or change their infant were asked to complete the *Breastfeeding Tent Feedback Form* (see Appendix A), which took approximately 5 minutes. In addition, other participants who engaged in a significant conversation with the Public Health Nurse were also asked to fill out the same feedback form. A self-addressed stamped envelope was provided to one participant who did not have sufficient time to fill out the feedback form during the event. Completion of the feedback form allowed participants to fill out a ballot and have their name entered for a gift basket draw.

An additional data collection tool, *the PHN Breastfeeding Tent Tracking Form* (see Appendix B), was developed to track the human and financial resources required to operate *The Breastfeeding Tent*. This tool was also used to monitor implementation and utilization of *The Breastfeeding Tent* initiative. Public Health Nurses staffing the tent were asked to have the PHN Tracking Form completed by the end of their designated shift.

Data from the feedback and tracking forms were entered by the Program Evaluator into Excel Spreadsheets. Basic descriptive statistics were generated for the quantitative data. Qualitative responses were grouped into themes.

---

---

## FINDINGS

---

---

### Breastfeeding Tent Feedback Form Findings

All 14 respondents of the survey were currently breastfeeding their infants. The length of time that mothers had been breastfeeding their babies ranged from 2 months to 25 months, and the average length of time breastfeeding was 8.8 months.

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** How did participants’ rate their comfort level in breastfeeding in public (e.g. restaurants, malls, fairs, public transit, etc.)?

Participants were asked how they would rate their comfort level with breastfeeding in public places. A 5-point Likert scale was utilized to assess comfort level. The majority of mothers felt “somewhat comfortable” (n=3) or “very comfortable” (n=7) with breastfeeding in public. However, four of the 14 mothers either felt “somewhat uncomfortable” (n=3) or “very uncomfortable” (n=1) with breastfeeding in public places. One mother noted that her comfort level with breastfeeding in public decreased when her baby was 18 months old because of reactions from the public. She stated, “*I was very comfortable until he hit about 18 months, then I felt people staring and comments.*” This is an interesting challenge that needs further exploration to determine how common this experience is among breastfeeding mothers of older infants.

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** How did event participants find out about *The Breastfeeding Tent*?

Eleven of the 14 participants who completed a feedback form saw *The Breastfeeding Tent* by walking by the tent. Two participants found out about the tent at the Festival Information Booth, and one participant also found out about the tent through word of mouth. Due to timing of enrollment in the Children’s Festival, there were no opportunities to promote the breastfeeding tent. As a result, it was expected that most people would find out about the breastfeeding tent through participation at the event.

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** How was your experience in using *The Breastfeeding Tent*?

Respondents were asked to rate their experience using *The Breastfeeding Tent* on a number of different components, including the temperature of the tent, seating, cleanliness, comfort, location, information and support. A 5-point Likert scale was used to gather participant feedback, whereas 1 indicated “needs improvement”, 2 indicated “fair”, 3 indicated “average”, 4 indicated “good” and 5 indicated “excellent”.

### Temperature

Seven respondents rated the temperature as either “good” (n=5) or “excellent” (n=2). Five respondents also rated the temperature as either “fair” (n=2) or “average” (n=3). The temperature of the tent varied from day-to-day as a result of the changing weather conditions. Note: There were two respondents who indicated that this question was not applicable.

### Seating

There was less agreement among respondents about the seating provided in the tent. Eleven of the 14 respondents rated the seating as either “good” (n=8) or “excellent” (n=3). Three other respondents rated the seating as “average” (n=1), “fair” (n=1) and “needs improvement” (n=1).

### Cleanliness

All fourteen respondents rated the cleanliness of the tent as either “good” (n=5) or “excellent” (n=9).

### Comfort

Almost all of the respondents rated the comfort of the tent as either “good” (n=7) or “excellent” (n=6). Only one respondent rated the comfort level as “fair”.

### Location

Almost all of the respondents also rated the location of the tent as either “good” (n=7) or “excellent” (n=6). Only one respondent rated the location as “average”.

### Information

All respondents rated the information available at the tent as either “good” (n=4) or “excellent” (n=9). Note: There was one respondent who indicated that this question was “not applicable”.

### Support

Twelve respondents rated the support that was provided at the tent as either “good” (n=2) or “excellent” (n=10). Note: There was one respondent who indicated that this question was “not applicable”, and another individual who did not respond to this particular question.

### Participant Feedback

In an open-ended question, thirteen respondents identified aspects that they liked about *The Breastfeeding Tent* (Note: One participant did not respond to this question). The most frequently mentioned aspects included the following: providing a shaded area for infant feeding at an outdoor event (n=6), and making a diaper change table available (n=5). Table 1 lists the various aspects that participants’ enjoyed about *The Breastfeeding Tent*, and the frequency of responses.

**Table 1: Description of Aspects of *The Breastfeeding Tent* that Participants Liked**

Aspects of <i>The Breastfeeding Tent</i> Initiative	Frequency of Responses
Shaded area for Breastfeeding	6
Change Table Available	5
Existence of the tent	3
Informative & Resources Available	3
Welcoming Environment & Friendly Staff	3
Centrally located	2
Supportive	1
Relaxing Atmosphere	1
Toys for Children	1
Privacy	1
Supplies Provided	1

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** What suggestions are there for improving the event?

### Suggestions from Participants

Eight of the 14 respondents provided suggestions for improving *The Breastfeeding Tent* initiative, including the following:

- More privacy from outside viewers (e.g. make the netting less transparent) (n=3)
- Larger space (n=2)
- More comfortable seating (n=2)
- Consider ways to address the temperature of the tent, that is, when the temperature is too warm (n=1)
- Garbage for diapers (n=1)
- More advertisement (i.e. through mail) (n=1)

One participant also recommended having *The Breastfeeding Tent* at more community events.

### PHN Breastfeeding Tent Tracking Form Findings

#### Locations

Due to some unforeseen challenges associated with weather conditions, the location and structure of the tent changed throughout the 4-day festival. On Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, the tent was located at the corner of Talbot and King Streets.

Overnight on June 7<sup>th</sup>, the tent was damaged possibly due to high wind and was unusable for the remainder of the festival. Fortunately, the organizers of the Children’s Festival happened to have an extra tent that they donated for *The Breastfeeding Tent* on Friday, June 8<sup>th</sup>. The tent was set up at a new location on Talbot Street, and was located 2 tents north of the previous tent area at the corner of King Street and Talbot Street.

On Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, the “breastfeeding area” was relocated to inside the Covent Garden Market in the kitchen on the second floor, because there was no tent available for use.

**Hours of Operation**

The tent was open 9 am to 4 pm each day. On Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup> the tent was anticipated to operate from 9 am to 6 pm, but due to the thunderstorm, the tent closed at 4 pm.

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** What were the human and financial resources required to operate *The Breastfeeding Tent*?

Table 2 provides an estimate of the human and financial resources required for this pilot project. The approximate costs to operate the tent, excluding the staffing resources was under \$450. The actual dollar figure is not provided for the staff time, although it is recognized that the human resources required to operate the tent at a four day event involves a significant financial contribution. Operation items refer to the following:

- infant supplies (e.g. diaper bag)
- toddler and preschool toys
- bottled water
- toiletries (e.g. lotion, hand sanitizer, kleenex)
- interior tent supplies (e.g. table clothes, carpets, decorations, duck tape, rope, storage bins)
- gift basket, and
- stationary supplies (e.g. paper, pens, folders)

**Table 2: Human and Financial Resources For Tent Operation**

Items	Cost
Human Resources	Full-time PHN * 25.25 hours Casual PHN * 8.2 hours
Event Fee	\$200
Tent	\$60
Operation Items	\$163.60
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$423.60 plus staff time</b>

During the weekday shifts (i.e. June 6-8), there was one PHN that worked the morning shift and another PHN that worked in the afternoon. For the Saturday shift on June 9<sup>th</sup>, a Casual PHN was hired to work for the entire day, along with a MLHU volunteer. A total of 33.45 hours was required to operate *The Breastfeeding Tent*. See Table 3 for a breakdown of the hours required for operation.

**Table 3: Breakdown of Hours Required for Operation**

	June 6	June 7	June 8	June 9	Activity Totals
Set-up Time*	2	0.5	1	0.5	4
Tent Operation	7	7.5	7	7	28.5
Take Down Time	0	0	0	0.5	0.5
Follow-up Time	0.25	0	0	0.2	0.45
<b>Daily Totals</b>	<b>9.25</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>33.45</b>

\* Set-up time included assembly of the tent structure, as well as set-up of pamphlets and other items inside the tent.

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** How many participants used *The Breastfeeding Tent*?

In order to keep track of the number of participants who had used *The Breastfeeding Tent*, a tracking form, as previously described, was developed for PHNs to record the different types of participants and the different ways in which participants utilized the tent. As outlined in Table 4, a total of eight mothers breastfed their infants. Four mothers used the tent to change their baby’s diapers, and did not breastfeed or bottle-feed their baby. There were a total of six support people (i.e. friends, spouses) who accompanied mothers and infants.

In addition, a total of 18 infants, 11 preschool children and 4 school-aged children came into the tent with their caregivers. There were an additional 14 people who came into the tent area either to ask the PHN questions or make comments about *The Breastfeeding Tent*. Some of these event participants included breastfeeding moms who wanted to ask breastfeeding-related questions, pregnant women asking prenatal and breastfeeding-related questions and a hospital nurse asking about breastfeeding and available supports.

**Table 4: Participants of *The Breastfeeding Tent***

Participants	June 6	June 7	June 8	June 9	Totals
Number of Infants	10	6	1	1	<b>18</b>
Number of Mothers feeding Baby at the breast	3	4	0	1	<b>8</b>
Number of Mothers bottle feeding baby	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
Number of Mothers changing diapers only (i.e. not breastfeeding or bottle feeding)	1	1	1	1	<b>4</b>
Number of Fathers and/or Support People accompanying mothers and infants	3	3	0	0	<b>6</b>
Number of Preschool Children	2	5	2	2	<b>11</b>
Number of School Aged Children	0	0	4	0	<b>4</b>
Number of “Other” Event Participants – making comments and/or asking questions	7	5	0	2	<b>14</b>

The tracking form included a section to record the types of inquires and/or one-to-one contact that PHNs had with participants. Table 5 highlights some examples of the types of inquires that participants asked the PHNs. There were some prenatal questions related to prenatal education, postpartum support and breastfeeding support. Participants also had breastfeeding related concerns that they expressed including weaning, and other infant feeding concerns (e.g. allergies).

**Table 5: Examples of One-to-One Contact with Participants on June 6 and June 7**

Type of Question	Inquiry
Prenatal	Prenatal education; postpartum supports; mom was pregnant with 1st child
Prenatal Re: Breastfeeding	Discussed breastfeeding and available community resources
Breastfeeding	Difficulty weaning; referred to Health Connections
Breastfeeding	10 week old baby - just diagnosed with lactose allergy (mom is breastfeeding); Referred to Health Connection to speak with dietitian
Breastfeeding	Weaning 14 months old (won't take bottle); Mom wants baby weaned at 2 years (religious reasons)
Breastfeeding	Difficulty weaning; referred to Health Connection
Breastfeeding	7 month old refusing breast/bottle in daytime
Breastfeeding	RN requesting more information re: breastfeeding in order to learn and refer clients

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** What information was available to participants in *The Breastfeeding Tent*? What type of information was distributed to participants?

A variety of resources were on display in *The Breastfeeding Tent*. These resources were available for participants to pick up themselves, and were handed out by PHNs if their particular questions were related to a pamphlet. Table 6 presents the list of resources available in the tent and the number of resources that were distributed to participants. The Health Connection Magnets (n=9) were the most popular resource, followed by the pamphlet on “Dad’s Role” (n=4), the “Breastfeeding Bookmark” (n=3), the “Breastfeeding Handbook” (n=3), and the “Health Unit Bookmark” (n=3).

**Table 6: Resources Distributed**

Name of Resource	No. of Resources Distributed
Health Connection Magnets	9
Dad’s Role	4
Breastfeeding Bookmark	3
Breastfeeding Handbook	3
Health Unit Bookmark	3
Breastfeeding Anytime	2
Breastfeeding Community Resources	2
Relaxation Massage	2
Breastfeeding Clinics	1
Grandparents	1
PPD Magnets	1
ImprovedforyouHU.com (MLHU website bookmark)	0
Positive Parenting Community Resources	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>

Table 7 lists the number of resources distributed on each day of the event. The majority of resources were distributed on the first day of the event (n=22). Subsequent days had fewer participants due to multiple factors, and thus fewer resources were distributed.

**Table 7: Number of Resources Distributed by Day of Event**

	No. of Resources Distributed by Day
June 6	22
June 7	6
June 8	2
June 9	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** What aspects of *The Breastfeeding Tent* worked well?

**PHN Recorded Feedback**

On the PHN tracking form, PHNs were asked to record anecdotal remarks about *The Breastfeeding Tent* that they heard from event participants. Some participants indicated that the tent was a good idea and were pleased that it was available for breastfeeding moms. For example, two grandparents came into the tent and said that it was a great idea and a good space to ‘get away’ for moms. One participant indicated that she thought that it would help moms’ comfort level in breastfeeding in public and stated that she would like to see more of these tents at outdoor events. Another woman who was pregnant commented that she breastfed her first child for 2 years, and felt that she could never tell anyone because long-term breastfeeding was not very well accepted. Some participants also noted that the availability of the toys was a great idea.

There were also inquiries from other event participants, including school aged children asking about the purpose of the tent, and at least one person asking about the draw. One dad was waiting for his partner and let his preschool daughter play with the toys in the tent.

The PHN tracking form also asked PHNs to comment on aspects of *The Breastfeeding Tent* that were successful. In general, *The Breastfeeding Tent* provided a shady area for moms to breastfeed and change their baby’s diaper. Some mothers expressed their appreciation for having a place to feed and change their infants. Information about breastfeeding and other health services was also accessed during the event. The initiative provided opportunities for PHNs to speak with breastfeeding mothers at a venue that is not normally reached. Mothers spoke candidly about their own perceptions of breastfeeding and the challenges that they experienced.

Many people stopped to look and acknowledge the tent. The banner display promoted the breastfeeding message and was visible to both foot and street traffic. The location of the tent on June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> was also noted to contribute to the success of the initiative. The corner of Talbot and King Streets was an effective location for the tent to raise visibility, because the tent was located between two popular attractions. In lieu of the

unforeseen challenges caused by the damaged tent, alternative solutions were provided.

**EVALUATION QUESTION:** What suggestions are there for improving the event?

### **Suggestions from PHN Staff**

#### ***Tent Structure, Set-up & Impacts of Weather Conditions***

As a result of the damaged tent, a new tent structure will need to be rented or purchased if this initiative is planned for events in the future. PHNs offered additional suggestions for future tent structure and set-up. Two people are needed for the initial set-up of the tent. There was only one PHN involved in setting up the tent on the first day of the festival, which proved to be challenging.

As mentioned by participants, PHNs also indicated that the size of the tent was too small. For example, the tent became very crowded when two moms, two infants and other siblings were present. Strollers had to be left outside of the tent because there was not enough room inside.

Due to the nature of an outdoor event, the weather conditions can often be unpredictable. The style of the tent utilized was not strong enough to withstand the damaging wind and storms that took place during the festival. A sturdier tent is needed to accommodate the varying weather conditions. If the same style of tent was used at future events, pails of sand would be needed to stabilize the tent on pavement. If the tent was located on grass, ropes and stakes could be used to secure the structure.

In addition, the windy weather also was an issue with securing pamphlets and other items on the table inside the tent. The mesh walls on three-sides of the tent allow airflow through the tent, but also pose problems for displaying items within the tent. It was recommended that for future events, the tent should have at least two solid sides that can block sun and wind.

In order to reduce the risk of the tent being damaged, it was also noted that if the tent needs to be moved during an event, it may be better to take it down and put it back up again the next morning.

Due to the hot, humid and windy weather conditions, the weather may have been a deterrent to participants coming into the tent. On the afternoon of June 8<sup>th</sup>, a severe thunderstorm occurred which impacted the number of participants at the festival.

#### ***Tent Location***

The location of the tent is an important factor to consider when planning a tent event. If the tent is to remain for more than one day at an event, consideration needs to be given for a more solid tent structure due to weather impacts and other unforeseen challenges.

#### ***Participation & Promotion***

Due to late enrolment in the Children’s Festival, advertisements about *The Breastfeeding Tent* were not

included in the brochures, on their website, and other promotional materials and communication. In order to increase participation of breastfeeding moms and their families at *The Breastfeeding Tent*, promotional efforts are needed to advertise the availability of the tent prior to the event and during the event. For example, a large sign in front of the tent is needed for advertisement along with the existing posters. Based on PHNs’ observations of the types of event participants, the primary population of the Children’s Festival was mainly school-aged children, as opposed to young families with infants. In particular, Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> seemed to have more school aged children, and very few infants. It was suggested that festival organizers could promote a baby/preschool area in order to attract more young families with infants to the festival. This would also provide a natural fit with *The Breastfeeding Tent* and may increase visibility.

#### ***Supplies***

A number of supplies are required to operate *The Breastfeeding Tent*. One particular supply that requires improvement is the garbage can. A better garbage can is needed with a plastic bag in it. The garbage can that was used at the festival overflowed with garbage from people walking by the tent.

#### ***Assistance and Accommodation from Event Organizers***

Volunteers at the festival were very helpful throughout the festival, especially on June 8<sup>th</sup> when the thunder storm occurred and all of the tent items needed to be quickly transported over to the market building. Volunteers at the festival also promoted *The Breastfeeding Tent* at the information booth.

---

## **LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE EVALUATION**

---

*The Breastfeeding Tent* initiative was the first of its kind implemented by the Middlesex-London Health Unit, and like other pilot projects, limitations and strengths were identified and will serve as the foundation for future initiatives. A process evaluation was conducted in order to monitor implementation of this new initiative. In addition, it would have been too early to conduct an outcome evaluation to measure effectiveness.

The use of more than one data source strengthened this process evaluation. PHN staff played a key role in collecting data on the tracking form and providing opportunities for participants to provide feedback. The evaluation data collection tools were designed collaboratively between the program evaluator and the PHN staff to ensure that questions were applicable to practice and the data was feasible to collect within the particular setting.

While there were only a small number of participants (i.e. 14 participants) who completed feedback forms, their responses are valuable in conjunction with the feedback recorded by PHNs to understand the strengths and areas for improvement in the event. It will be important to continue to collect feedback from participants at future events in order to monitor implementation of the tent initiative.

There are some improvements needed with regards to the sampling framework for participants completing feedback forms. Because of the objective to provide a visual reminder to

the public that breastfeeding is encouraged and supported, it would be beneficial to invite participant feedback from all event participants who stop by the tent, rather than just those participants who have significant conversations with PHN. The initial intention was for PHN staff to invite participants who either came in to use the tent and/or had a significant conversation with the PHN. The rationale for this method was based on the need to build a certain level of rapport with participants before inviting them to participate. However, it becomes a judgement call on behalf of the PHN as to what indicates a “significant conversation”. Gathering feedback from a broader range of event participants (e.g. fathers, support people accompanying moms, event participants passing by the tent who stop to talk with PHNs) will help to provide perspectives that reflect the diversity of the population at a given event. For example, some perspectives of participants passing by the tent may differ significantly from those who have actually used the tent.

Limitations of the survey technique may involve their need to care for their infants, and a lack of time to complete the survey. Also, participants may censor some of their actual views about the tent initiative as a result of the social desirability bias. This bias may lead people to express opinions that are socially acceptable. Ensuring that the survey was anonymous may have helped to minimize this effect, and encourage participants to share their opinions.

Providing the incentive of the gift basket draw seemed to encourage participants to take the time to complete the feedback form during their visit to the tent. There was the option for participants to mail in their completed survey at their convenience with the self-addressed, stamped envelope. One completed survey was returned to the health unit by mail.

---

## SUMMARY

---

There is evidence from the findings that the three main purposes of the evaluation were met in this pilot initiative. Reflections on each of the three purpose statements are described below:

- *To assess participant satisfaction levels with The Breastfeeding Tent* - The positive response from respondents on the feedback form, and other event participants who engaged in conversations with PHNs staffing the tent, suggest that there is merit in offering a breastfeeding tent at other events within the community.
- *To track the human and financial resources required to operate The Breastfeeding Tent* – The costs associated with initiating and implementing the tent were recorded. This information provided baseline data for future event planning. A significant amount of human resources are required to operate the tent in comparison to costs of setting up the tent. From a public health perspective, the breastfeeding tent was primarily intended to offer environmental support. However, by having the tent staffed by PHNs provides opportunities for both public education and awareness.
- *To monitor implementation and utilization of The Breastfeeding Tent initiative and to identify successes and challenges to inform future planning.* – Both of the data collection forms provided useful information to identify lessons learned and inform next steps.

In addition, there is evidence to suggest that the goals of the initiative were met to some extent.

- *To provide a supportive and pleasant environment for breastfeeding mothers and families.* Participants expressed very positive opinions about the tent initiative, and indicated that the tent offered both support and a pleasant environment. Areas for improvement for future tent initiatives were noted by participants as well.
- *To provide a visual reminder to the public that breastfeeding is encouraged and supported.* Feedback from event participants indicated that *The Breastfeeding Tent* did provide a visual reminder to the public. In addition to those who used the tent to care for their infants and/or seek information about infant feeding, many people stopped to look and acknowledge the tent. The banner posted on the side of the tent proved to be an asset as both pedestrians and people in vehicles stopped and commented. The corner of King and Talbot Streets proved to be an ideal location for increasing awareness about breastfeeding among event participants and the general public because it was in a high traffic area.

---

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

---

The following recommendations are based on the lessons learned throughout the implementation of *The Breastfeeding Tent* initiative. The recommendations have been grouped into five main categories: tent structure, event planning, staffing and staff training, promotion, and evaluation.

### Tent Structure

The tent that was purchased for this event was lightweight and presented problems due to wind and stormy weather conditions. Due to the nature of this pilot initiative, MLHU is not prepared to purchase a durable tent intended for long-term use until the decision is made that the initiative has effective outcomes that should be sustained. The following list provides options for obtaining a tent structure:

- Negotiate with event planners to determine the availability of using one of their existing tents.
- Purchase a similar tent knowing the limitations and the potential unpredictable setbacks.
- Ensure tent size is adequate for intended purpose, and give consideration to the walls of the tent (e.g. transparent versus solid).

### Event Planning

There are many considerations to take into account when choosing to participate in an event, and operating the tent at the event. The following describes some options for event planning:

- Investigate the audience of the event to ensure that there is an appropriate fit with *The Breastfeeding Tent* and consider establishing a baby/preschool area at events (e.g. Children’s Festival) to attract young families with infants to events.
- Give consideration to one-day only events in comparison to multi-day events due to the time involved with set-up, take down, and ensuring equipment and supplies were kept safe over night.
- Establish a back-up plan due to the unpredictability of holding an outdoor event.

- Ensure that the location of the tent will raise visibility of the breastfeeding messaging.
- Explore options for tent operation, including such items as more comfortable seating, improved garbage can, etc.

### Staffing and Staff Training

The availability of PHNs at *The Breastfeeding Tent* is a central component of the initiative. As a result, additional planning around staffing needs and training is warranted, including:

- Obtain interest/commitment from MLHU Casual PHNs and volunteers to participate in future events
- Organize an inservice for Casual PHNs and volunteers for training on operation of the tent
- Ensure that there is more than one person available for the initial set up of the tent.

### Promotion

The decision to participate in the Children’s Festival was too late to take advantage of strategic advertising opportunities. Although *The Breastfeeding Tent* was acknowledged in the Children’s Festival flyer itinerary of activities, it was not properly named and was not placed in an ideal section. Earlier collaboration with organizers will allow for more adequate and appropriate promotion. Additional considerations for promotional activities, include the following:

- Poster stand for the front of tent.
- Continue to utilize banner on the side of tent, and ensure tent location is conducive to providing a visual reminder of breastfeeding.
- Utilize laminated posters in strategic locations around event site.
- Ensure that the event planners appropriately advertise *The Breastfeeding Tent* in all promotional materials.

### Evaluation

The following provides a lists of recommended changes to the evaluation of the future initiatives:

- Modify existing data collection tools (e.g. improve the tracking of tent participants by tracking the number of pregnant moms asking breastfeeding related questions, and the number of mothers asking questions about breastfeeding, but not actually breastfeeding, bottle feeding or changing diapers at the tent).
- Consider surveying all event participants who come to the tent for their perceptions of the tent and their feedback on areas for improvement.

---

## REFERENCES

---

Health Canada. (1999). *Nutrition for a Health Pregnancy: National Guidelines for the Childbearing Years*. Ottawa: Minister of Public Works and Government Services.

London International Children’s Arts Festival. (2007). *London International Children’s Arts Festival: Mission Statement and Guiding Principles*. Available online at <http://www.londonchildfest.com/>. Accessed: August 8, 2007.

Middlesex-London Health Unit. (2005 January). *Breastfeeding Practices, Awareness & Attitudes in Middlesex-London, The Health Index, Issue 13*. London: Middlesex-London Health Unit. Author: Bray Jenkin, K. Available online at:

<http://www.healthunit.com/articlesPDF/11184.pdf> Accessed: August 8, 2007.

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. (1997). *Mandatory Health Programs and Service Guidelines*. Available online at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/pub/pubhealth/manprog/mhp.pdf>. Accessed: August 8, 2007.

Region of Peel Public Health. (2004). *A Breastfeeding Place: Evaluation Report*. Region of Peel Public Health: Brampton, ON.

---

## REPORT PREPARED BY:

---

**Melissa McCann**, *Program Evaluator*, Research, Education, Evaluation & Development Services, Middlesex-London Health Unit

**Ruby Brewer**, *Public Health Nurse*, Family Health Promotion Team, Family Health Services, Middlesex-London Health Unit

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

The authors would like to thank Deanna Stirling, Laura Dueck, Nancy Summers, and Charlene Beynon for their feedback on draft reports.

For more information, contact:  
Melissa McCann, BA, MSW  
Program Evaluator  
Research, Education, Evaluation & Development (REED) Services  
Middlesex-London Health Unit  
50 King Street  
London, ON N6A 5L7  
519-663-5317 ext. 2554  
[melissa.mccann@mlhu.on.ca](mailto:melissa.mccann@mlhu.on.ca)



**MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT**  
50 King St., London, ON N6A 5L7  
tel: (519) 663-5317 • fax: (519) 663-9581  
[health@mlhu.on.ca](mailto:health@mlhu.on.ca)

**STRATHROY OFFICE – KENWICK MALL**  
51 Front St. E., Strathroy, ON N7G 1Y5  
tel: (519) 245-3230 • fax: (519) 245-4772

**AN ACCREDITED TEACHING HEALTH UNIT**





## Appendix A: Breastfeeding Tent Feedback Form

We would like your thoughts on the following questions. Your comments will help us understand what worked well at this event and what improvements can be made in the future. Your participation is voluntary. Please do not mark this page with your name, as this survey is to be anonymous.

1. Are you currently **breastfeeding**?

- Yes If yes →
- No

a. How **long** have you been breastfeeding your baby? \_\_\_\_\_  
(# of weeks or months)

2. How would you rate your **comfort level in breastfeeding in public places** (e.g. restaurants, malls, fairs, public transit, etc.)? (PLEASE CIRCLE ONE RESPONSE)

<b>Very Uncomfortable</b>	<b>Somewhat Uncomfortable</b>	<b>Neither Comfortable or Uncomfortable</b>	<b>Somewhat Comfortable</b>	<b>Very Comfortable</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
1	2	3	4	5	N/A

3. How did you **hear** about *The Breastfeeding Tent*?

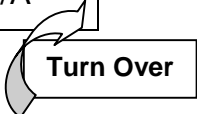
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate **your experience** in using *The Breastfeeding Tent* on the following components: (1 being needs improvement and 5 being excellent)

	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>
<b>a. Temperature</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>b. Seating</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>c. Cleanliness</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>d. Comfort</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>e. Location</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>f. Information</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
<b>g. Support</b>	1	2	3	4	5	N/A



5. What did you **like** about *The Breastfeeding Tent*?

---

---

---

6. What would you **change** about *The Breastfeeding Tent*?

---

---

---

7. Do you have any additional comments?

---

---

---

---

**Thank you for taking the time to complete this Feedback Form!**

**Purpose: In order to monitor the implementation of this pilot project, please complete this tracking form throughout EACH PHN shift.**

### Appendix B: PHN Breastfeeding Tent Tracking Form

<b>Staff Member’s Name(s):</b>	
<b>Location:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>(dd/mm/year)</b>
<b>Time of Tent Operation:</b>	

	Estimated No. of Minutes or Hours (if not applicable to your shift, indicate N/A)
<b>Set-up Time:</b>	
<b>Actual Hours of Shift and/or Tent Operation:</b>	
<b>Take Down Time:</b>	
<b>Follow-up / Documentation Time:</b>	
<b>Total Hours:</b>	

Name of Pamphlet	No. of Pamphlets on display at start of tent operation	No. of Pamphlets remaining on display at end of tent operation	No. of Pamphlets distributed
1. Community Resources			
2. Positive Parenting			
3. Breastfeeding Clinics			
4. Health Connection Magnets			
5. Breastfeeding Anytime			
6. Grandparents			
7. Dad's Role			
8. Relaxation Massage			
9. Health Unit Bookmark			
10. Breastfeeding Bookmark			
11. Breastfeeding Handbook			
12. PPD Magnets			
<b>Total</b>			

	Tally of Tent Participants (IHt)	Totals
Number of <b>Infants</b>		
Number of <b>Mothers feeding Baby at the breast</b>		
Number of <b>Mothers bottle feeding baby</b> (i.e. recognizing mother could be feeding breastmilk)		
Number of <b>Mothers changing diapers only</b> (i.e. not breastfeeding or bottle feeding)		
Number of <b>Fathers and/or Support People accompanying mothers and infants</b>		
Number of <b>Preschool Children</b>		
Number of <b>School Aged Children</b>		
Number of <b>“Other” Event Participants</b> – making comments and/or asking questions		

**Anecdotal Remarks:**

Have you had any comments / inquires from participants and/or the general public? Please provide a brief description of the nature of their comments / remarks / questions / information provided:

--

**Engaged in one-to-one counselling and/or discussion about breastfeeding or parenting?**

**What was the nature of the inquiry or discussion? Please provide a brief description.**

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

**What were the successes of the initiative today? (point form is fine)**

--

**What areas are there for improvement? (point form is fine)**

--

**Additional Comments / Observations:**

--