

A photograph of a woman with dark hair, smiling warmly as she holds the hands of a baby lying on its back. The baby is wearing a white patterned onesie and has its mouth open. The background is softly blurred, suggesting an indoor setting with natural light.

# FEEDING GENERATIONS

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*THE IMPACTFUL FAMILY FEEDING CHECKLIST*

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VANESSA A. SIMMONS

A CHECKLIST TO MAXIMIZE YOUR TIME AFTER BIRTH

**DISCOVER** the secrets to mastering your milk supply and feeding your baby

**LEARN** how self-care is the key to your feeding your body, mind and spirit

**ALIGN** yourself with the ancient wisdom of nurturing to feed your dream

## **A Note from the Author:**

Whether you're feeling like **you're in a constant battle with your milk supply, you can't keep up with the demand** of nursing and/or pumping around the clock, or **you're still struggling with your baby's latch** at more than four weeks old. **I want you to know that you are not alone.** You could even be **overwhelmed with sadness and loneliness** from the emotional investment of constantly *pouring yourself out* for your baby to prioritize their survival, yet simultaneously you feel **empty and unsure of how to refill your cup.** It's a pretty amazing time to be nursing with all of the amazing online support that is available, but what is lacking in these support groups is accountability.

My prayer is that this checklist helps you to see breastfeeding from a completely new, and fresh perspective. **I decided to write the full-length journal guidebook for parents to provide a clear and full-proof plan to maximize their time after birth.** In the ebook, I take a deep dive into the seemingly **never-ending issue of milk supply**, how to *get sleep without forcing your baby into a sleep training schedule*, and *going back to work without the fear of anxiety or separation from your baby.*

**This checklist**, however, is just a quick, hands-on resource to help you during those early postpartum days when you're feeling unsure or ready to quit. **Always remember to breathe and get support.**

Stay safe, be well, and become whole,

Vanessa A. Simmons, Photographer, CLEC, Speaker, Author

**Founder - Normalize Breastfeeding & Coach - Latch the Gap Leadership Academy**

# 1. Feed Your Baby

*Here are some common mistakes to avoid, and a checklist of what to do instead:*

## ***Skin-to-skin***

### 1. Forgetting to remove all of the blankets and all of the clothing (except the diaper)

- More clothing and blankets = less oxytocin flow, less milk flow, and ultimately less will be produced
- The more irritated or irritable you will become
- Helps you to observe the your baby
- Helps baby feel nurtured and bonded to you

### 2. Not sleeping close enough to your baby

- Your baby needs you to learn how to breathe, they actually need to hear you breathing and feel your rhythm close by
- Your baby will feel comfortable and confident to sleep soundly because they hear and feel you (like they did in the womb)
- I suggest is using a bedside sleeper something that is recommended for safe sleep

### 3. Not practicing skin-to-skin with your partner

- This is a great opportunity for your partner to actually experience some of the oxytocin flow as you are not able to engage in sexual intimacy immediately after birth
- After baby goes to sleep, it's a great time for cuddles and snuggles
- skin-to-skin is going to increase your physical desire to be with your partner after you've completed the postpartum bleeding period

### ***Hand-expression***

1. Not hand expressing before and after your baby feeds.
  - You might not realize this right away, but there is still milk in your breast after your baby has attempted to breastfeed.
  - Hand express to remove any additional milk that is in the breast
  - this action sends a signal to the brain that tells your body to produce more milk
  - Your baby will notice an increase in supply in only 3-4 days
2. Forgetting to express when they are away from their baby
  - Take the time to hand Express when we're away from our baby to maintain your current supply



- remove the milk with your hand into a spoon, a cup, or in my case into a public bathroom toilet (because I was out grocery shopping).
  - Make it a point to express your milk, and get it out so that there more milk in the breast when you return home
3. Not using hand expression to alleviate or avoid pain
- Use hand-expression to avoid the nipple pain caused by latch issues and engorgement, some are not responsive to pumps
  - Using a syringe or a cup for feeding is ideal to mimic the flow of the feed and conserve the milk that has been expressed
  - Feeling a lack of supply because hand expression doesn't fill a bottle due to a common misconception of baby's tummy size
  - Grab my "[Milk & Honey Hand Expression Mini Workshop](#)" to get your hand expression questions answered

## ***Introducing the Bottle***

1. Pointing bottle *down* into your baby's mouth trusting that a slow flow bottle can control the flow of the milk
  - It's best to use a technique called **pace feeding** to prevent your baby from feeling overwhelmed with the amount of milk they are receiving in comparison to the breast.
  - Instead, sit your baby up and hold the bottle parallel to the floor, allowing your baby to receive the natural ebb and flow of the bottle in a motion that mimics the breast.

## ***Completely Removing Milk***

1. Not using a warm compress and breast massage
  - Follow advice suggested by IBCLC
  - Use this process to allow the milk to flow
  - Use this process to prevent future blockage
2. Not paying attention to your babies suck and swallow patterns

- Pay attention to whether or not your baby is swallowing to verify that they are in fact getting milk
  - Know what to look for when it comes to other external signs of a good feed, like relaxed hands
  - Spot these things earlier rather than later, to avoid a dip in supply
3. Not compressing at the end of every feed
- Dr. Newman, Canadian Pediatrician and father, suggests that **compression** at the end of every feed is crucial once your baby has started to fall asleep
  - Ask yourself if your baby got a good feed: look for relaxed hands, a calm demeanor, or a **milk drunk** sleeping baby.
  - Begin to compress as they start to slow down the suckling, time it so that when your baby begins to stop suckling you'll wait until they begin to suck again and now start to compress the breast, making a C shape with same side hand as breast and using thumb pressure on the top of the breast.

## 2. Feed Your Body

*Here are some common mistakes to avoid and a checklist of what to do instead:*

### ***Placental Wound Care***

1. Not understanding your placental wound is the size of the placenta that was removed from your womb.
  - Practice *intentional* placental wound care
  - House visits with your midwife or even more common now, virtual appointments with your doctor can be a great way to check in and allow the mother who's given birth the chance to remain restful.
  - Why is it that we aren't creating space for mothers and babies to have this kind of support immediately after birth? We can recreate this in modern society and normalize the need for postpartum support.
2. Not lying down, and not keeping your feet up.
  - This will allow you to conserve the little bit of energy that they have. If you're up on your feet all day for a newborn that cannot move you are wasting your time and energy.

- What you want to do is be in a lying position for the majority of the day or sitting in a bed near a restroom and have the ability to be able to clean and care for yourself. This way you can also clean and care for your baby.
- As long as you have everything you need in your bed or near your bedside, you don't have to do anything extra or put any unnecessary strain on your body.

### 3. Not turning off their electronics.

- Your natural energy is becoming a resource for the device. Think about it. There's a transfer of energy when we choose to pull out an electronic and give it our attention and our time.
- This is something that we need to be very aware of. When you turn off the electronics your body *and your mind* can decompress from all of the noise and get into a deep state of rest.
- Our family has found it very helpful to turn off the WIFI when we sleep and we often feel much more rested when we wake up as opposed to when we don't turn it off.

- Grab my “[Sound Asleep Solution Workshop](#)” for parents of children 0-7 years old, no sleep training is necessary when you learn to align with your baby’s natural sleep cycles.

### ***Water Intake***

1. Not having enough water in a specific area where you typically sit down to nurse your baby can become a slippery slope for dehydration.
  - Use a caddy to keep water everywhere you’ll likely sit down to nurse.
  - Allow the baby’s father or baby’s older siblings to help you by refilling your water supply.
  - Drink to thirst, but be sure to count the number of gulps that satisfy you, measure how many cups that is, and keep track of how many you are drinking per day
2. Not remembering that you’re drinking for two.
  - So just like when you were pregnant, you were eating for two. Now, you’re drinking for two.
  - Remember that your baby’s body is about 70-80% water, and ***your milk provides that water*** so you have to get that water into your system, no

matter what. Then, you can feed your baby and provide the proper nutrition that they need.

- Unfortunately, formula cannot provide this kind of consistency. Formula cannot provide the exact measurement of water that your baby needs in every bottle.

### 3. Not prioritizing water before food and snacks

- I say this all the time, when we *feel* hungry oftentimes we're more ***thirsty*** and because we're thirsty we actually have a problem where we'll tend to snack and eat when we don't really want to. We just keep thinking, "I'm hungry...I'm hungry." However, the reality is that you're thirsty.

- Your thirst is so important to remember especially if you're looking to drop some excess weight after giving birth. You want to remember this:  
**always drink your water *before* your meals and *before* your snacks.**

Also, eat water fruits like cantaloupe, watermelon, honey dew, and pineapple for snacks to keep you hydrated all day long.

- It's going to fill you up you're going to know when you feel full much sooner than you would if you had not decided to drink water before you started eating.

## *Eating Cautiously*

1. Not be paying attention to the foods that you're eating
  - Some of the foods that you eat could cause you discomfort and therefore intern cause your baby discomfort.
  - Sometimes, it might be one of your favorite foods, but it makes your baby really gassy and fussy.
  - It's super important to start tracking your food from the very beginning to know what is making your baby fussy or sleepy
  
2. Not eating enough whole foods to get enough protein to produce a sufficient milk supply
  - So we all know and we've been told that meat is the way to go when it comes to getting the proper nutrients for your baby in regards to protein
  - Studies have shown that the amount of protein that has been recommended by many professionals in America is too much protein
  - Protein that is used in a consistent workout regimen it turns to fat
  
3. Not focusing on nurturing yourself with healthy foods so that you can also sustain yourself as well as your baby



- This is crucial because too often we focus on what the baby needs that we don't even begin to think about the baby's source
- The source also needs to be protected, taken care of, and nurtured.
- To only consider the needs of the baby as independent of the parents is irresponsible

# 3. Feed Your Mind

*Here are some common mistakes to avoid and a checklist of what to do instead:*

## ***Planning for Baby***

1. Overthinking the process
  - make your plan make it simple and let's just see how things go
  - Set feeding goals that can create a target for you or your baby to hit each month (ex. 1 month: Latching well without aids like pumps and nipple shields, 2 months: baby is steadily gaining weight, 3 months: I am feeling good about breastfeeding)
2. Trying to control the plan
  - it's just a plan so that you can dream about all the wonderful things that you want to see happen after your baby is born
  - Review and rewrite your feeding goals as life happens (don't feel bad, just go with the flow)
3. Feeling overwhelmed when things don't go according to your plan
  - the plan is just there as a guide
  - it's not here to try to change the world

- it's just here to give you a simple draft of what you would *like* to see happen, but don't get too crazy with it just make a plan

### ***Utilize a Strong Mindset***

#### 1. Doing too much

- Have you ever just tried to do too much?
- Now is *not* the time for that
- Now the time to **slow down, relax,** and **reflect** on everything that is changing around you

#### 2. Refusing to ask for help

- this is the time when you need it the most and it can be hard to ask people for help because we have to come from a place of vulnerability
- take the time to ask for help so that you can get the help that you really truly need and deserve

#### 3. Forgetting to use your resources

- you know that you have amazing people in your life and amazing resources in your life

- sometimes when you get into a difficult situation it can be really hard to remember that
- I want to encourage you to *remember* the people you have in your life and  
WRITE IT DOWN.

### ***Maternal Mentorship***

#### 1. Journeying alone

- you *cannot* do this alone
- motherhood is a communal space
- we cannot continue to believe that “I got this, and I don’t need anybody’s help” mentality
- or “I don’t want to ask for help” No, Sis, that is not the way that you do this and it is not the way this was created to be. If you don’t have your mother and Auntie or cousin someone who can help you you’ve got to reach out and ask for help from your circle of friends or neighbors.
- Learn about the community as you watch and/or listen to live recordings of the [Normalize Breastfeeding Podcast](#) in our private discussion group.

#### 2. Trying to be a super mom

- that's not a real thing
- pretending to be a super mama is a dangerous concept to ourselves and our community
- Why? Because mothers are supposed to be able to be vulnerable and be cared for
- she might have mental health issues that she needs to deal with and is she doesn't deal with them something dangerous can happen down the line

3. Trying to snap back things to how they used to be

- it's just not that way
- I'm not just talking about your body, I am also talking about your mind.
- Remember that your whole being has changed during this time of having children.
- Watch my motivational speech on YouTube, "[Overcoming Fear with the Power of Tunnel Vision](#)," as many times as you need to feel uplifted and ready to pour into your new self so you can transform your life.

## 4. Feed Your Spirit

*Here are some common mistakes to avoid and a checklist of what to do instead:*

### *Morning Routine*

1. Not knowing that the self-care journey begins within
  - make the time to go within yourself so that you can **figure out who you are** after delivering your baby
  - Make time to listen to your inner voice to better **understand who are you becoming** in the process of learning to feed your baby
  - Make time to **envision who you want to be** because that is the only real factor that you can control about your future
2. Not knowing how to use the *internal* to impact in your life *externally*
  - Studies have shown that when your baby is with you and you are in an irritable mood your baby will reflect the same annoyance
  - A good portion of the time, if your baby is fussy it's because your baby senses that you are being fussy too, hence the saying 'monkey see monkey do'

3. Not developing an awareness of how movement is not only for your body but it impacts your emotional and mental health

- moving around in the morning and getting your blood to flow in the morning instead of waking up grumbling and feeling so angry that you have to get out of bed to go and do things or whatever it might be
- getting up and spending time with yourself, getting to know yourself, and making the time to do the things that you really and truly love to pour into yourself is so crucial
- It will determine how you will pour into others

# 5. Feed Your Dream

*Here are some common mistakes to avoid and a checklist of what to do instead:*

## ***Prioritizing Your Dream***

1. Waiting until you wean to discover to rediscover yourself
  - you don't have to stop breastfeeding in order to begin to know who you are
  - as mothers we can become aware of who we are as we're nurturing our babies
2. Waiting until you wean to start imagining something bigger for your life
  - have you had a really great idea but you were breastfeeding and thought, "well maybe after I'm done breastfeeding I'll write it down?" and then you forgot about it.
  - Maybe you thought, "when I get my next check" or "maybe when I know what to do"
  - My suggestion is that you just start writing out a plan of what you see happening even if you're just taking a few minutes to visualize what it looks like and imagine how it feels to reach that and accomplish that goal



3. Waiting until you need to start taking action and making that dream a reality

- Langston Hughes said, “Hold fast to your dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken-winged bird that cannot fly.”
- I want to ask you today, what is your dream? What is that thing that gives you life? It literally breathes life into you and it gets you so excited about being here that you don't want to give it up?
- If you're pregnant or you're breastfeeding you're feeling like it's something you can't accomplish or achieve if you're feeling overwhelmed or feeling down and out because you're carrying this baby, and you're also carrying this dream I want to tell you right now, “***It's possible, you can do this!***”

Feel free to dive right in to some of my best purpose discovery resources that have been created with you in mind.

- Watch my mini-course, [High Value Goals: How to Cultivate JOY on Autopilot](#)

[Share this checklist](#) with a #breastfriend who'll appreciate it.

## About the Author



Vanessa A. Simmons is a first-generation Ghanaian-American photographer, speaker, and author.

As a Lactation Educator and Certified Blactivist, Simmons is speaking at conferences and events to eliminate general miseducation around the topic. Simmons is a public speaker focused on transforming the modern mindset around the natural, yet difficult task of breastfeeding.

Vanessa trains lactation professionals to better understand and connect with millennial families online. She activates her gift of vision through speaking and writing to transform the mindset of powerhouse advocates, teaching them to ambitiously pursue their dreams while simultaneously prioritizing joy and rest as they serve their family and community.

Simmons resides with her loving husband and three children in San Diego, CA.



## MEET THE AUTHOR

VANESSA A SIMMONS

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“If there's a book that you want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then **you** must write it.”

**-Toni Morrison**

### HAVE QUESTIONS?

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