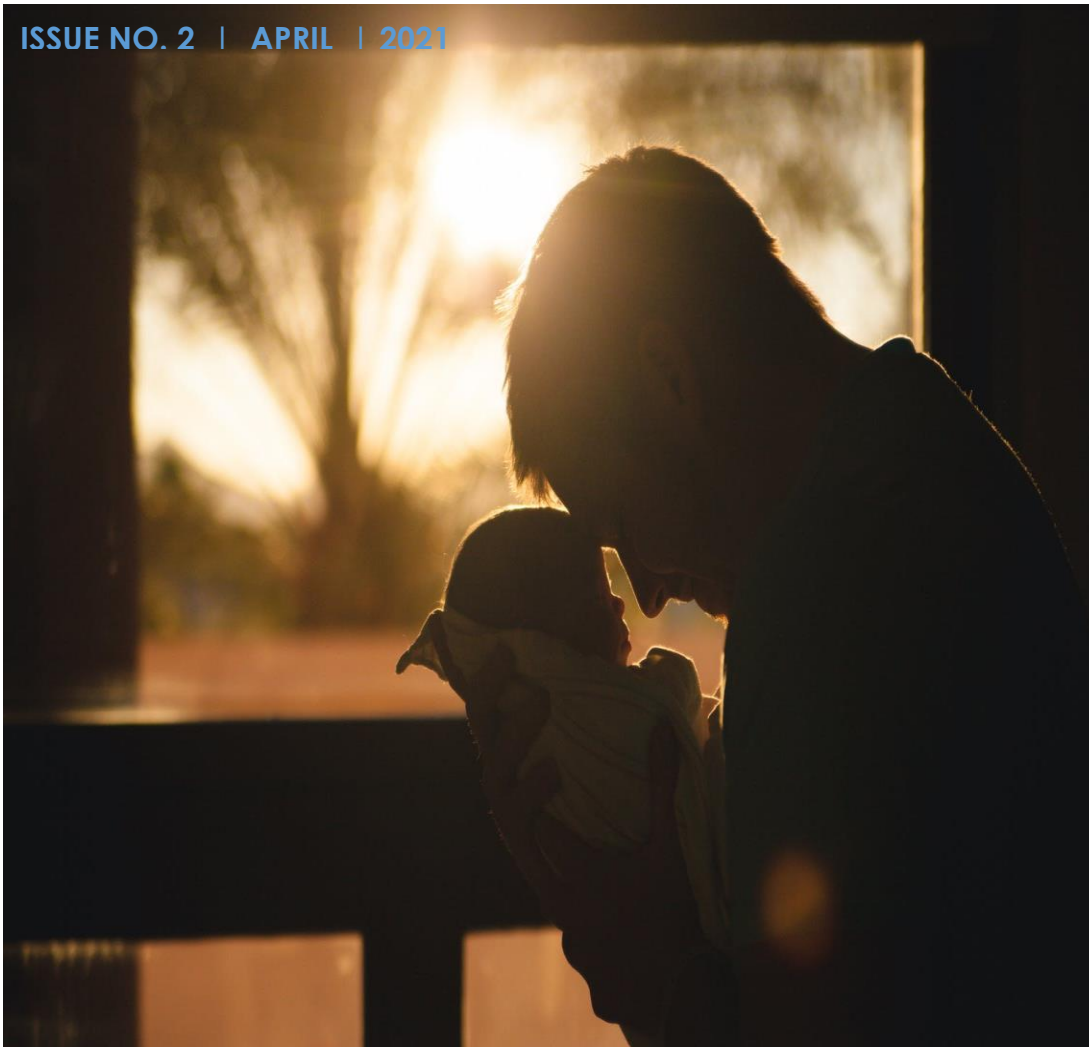


FATHERHOOD NEWSLETTER



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In our second bi-monthly newsletter we have information on social support, how you can help your baby's mother navigate breastfeeding, and other resources. We hope to connect with dads across Oklahoma to provide information, solicit feedback on what needs Oklahoma men face and offer resources to help you be the healthy, balanced, and engaged father you want to be.

Please connect with us! Contact our Fatherhood Initiative Project lead James Craig Jamescc@health.ok.gov (405) 426-8089

Who is in your corner?

1 Many studies have shown the importance of **social relationships** to physical and mental health. These are the relationships that you have between your friends, co-workers, those you may go to church with and of course your spouse or romantic partner. 2 Unfortunately men often have smaller **social circles of support** than women, and may rely only on their partners/spouses for support. Consider reaching out and connecting with your friends, join a men's group in your church, and expand your social relationships! Meet for a cook out, go to the next car show, or maybe share your favorite spot for catching fish.

**Preparing
for a
Lifetime**
It's Everyone's Responsibility

Making time for play

3How many times have our kids asked, “dad can you come play with me?” and we often respond with, “maybe later?” Now more than ever with more of us working in the home it can be hard to pull away from work and make time to play with our children. Of course there are times when we can't stop our work and start play. Kids understand this, but when we say “not now” **children will learn that they can trust that we will ask them to play later if we stay consistent in making time to engage in play when we say we will.**



Did you know?

4More and more studies are finding a link between increased social media use and depression. Our phones were designed to make us want to look at them, touch them, and spend more and more time on them. Combine a similar set of incentives for social media companies and we can often find ourselves in a loop of checking Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and others more and more of our day. Setting limits on these apps (there are even tools to do so built into the newest versions of the iPhone and Android systems) can help us be happier dads and give us back time in our day



New dad tool for your toolbox for April: 5Breastfeeding: how dads can help

1. Encourage your baby's mom to make a **breastfeeding plan** and set goals. Let her know that you'll be there to help along the way
2. **Dads too should get plenty of skin-to-skin time where you cuddle the baby on your bare chest.** This is great bonding time; when you spend time skin to skin with your newborn hormonal changes occur including a rise in dopamine. The rise in dopamine plus the release of oxytocin means your brain creates a positive association with close interaction with baby. So skin to skin time with you can **help your natural parenting instincts to “kick in”**.
3. Think about how you can be **thoughtful** in helping your baby's mother when she is breastfeeding. Small things can make a big difference. You can bring her a pillow so she's comfortable during feedings, a healthy snack, and make sure she has a glass of water.
4. Encourage her, and let her know you're proud of her. Breastfeeding can be hard. If she has problems, help her find some support when she needs it here: **<https://oklahoma.gov/health/family-health/breastfeeding.html>**
5. **How to warm breast milk** when mom has stored it:
 - a. Heat water using either a teakettle or microwave. Pour very warm (not boiling) water in a mug or bowl.
 - b. Place the sealed bag or bottle of breast milk in the bowl of warm water.
 - c. Leave the milk in the warm water for 1-2 minutes until breast milk reaches desired temperature.
 - d. With clean hands, pour breast milk into a bottle, or, if it's already in a bottle, screw on the bottle nipple. Swirl breast milk (never shake it) to mix in the fat, if it's separated. Test the milk's temperature on your wrist. It should be warm, but not hot.

Building cultural connections

In a world where traveling to visit local, regional, or national places to increase our cultural knowledge (museums, sites of cultural importance) may not be safe yet due to COVID-19 concerns; **visiting the local library is still a great way to find resources to explore and educate your children on the beauty of our cultural diversity** (as many are offering remote orders and pick up). The more we can do as parents to build understanding and curiosity in our children to explore other cultures the better prepared they will be to engage with peers who may be different from them.



Need Resources? Throughout the state you can call 211 or go to <https://www.211oklahoma.org> for help with housing, food, utilities, mental health, transportation, COVID-19 information, or other needs.

In Pottawatomie county- Contact Steve Palmer at Shawnee Bridges Out of Poverty bridgessawnee@gmail.com, (405) 481-6313

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