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## Barbie and Disney Princesses Every Which Way: Balancing Family Values with Individual Choices

Tue, 12/15/2009 - 16:00 | 4 Comments

By Elaine Barrington

It used to be so much easier...

Sometimes I miss the days when my values and my daughter's were one and the same. For the first few years of Isabelle's life I believed I ...

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Fertility and conception, pregnancy, childbirth, and the early postpartum period.

### 2. the infant

From newborn to 17 months.

### 3. the toddler

From 18 months to age 3.

### 4. the growing child

From age 4 to age 9.

### 5. the adolescent

From age 10 to age 18.

Home » 2. The Infant

## Breastfeeding after Sexual Abuse

Submitted by The Attached Family on Tuesday, October 13 2009

No Comment

By Kathleen Kendall-Tackett, PhD, IBCLC, *member of API's Resource Advisory Council and API's Editorial Review Board, adapted from Breastfeeding Made Simple by Nancy Mohrbacher and Kathleen Kendall-Tackett*

For survivors of childhood sexual abuse or sexual assault, breastfeeding can pose challenges. Unfortunately, sexual abuse and assault are relatively common experiences, affecting 20% to 25% of women. The reactions of abuse survivors to breastfeeding run the whole range of responses – from really disliking it to finding it tremendously healing.

Surprisingly, research has shown us that abuse survivors are more likely to breastfeed. The two published studies on this topic showed that abuse survivors had a higher intention to breastfeed and a higher rate of breastfeeding initiation. Our research has also shown that a higher percentage of mothers who were abuse or assault survivors were breastfeeding compared with mothers without a trauma history. We have also found higher rates of Attachment Parenting behaviors, such as bed-sharing, among the abuse and assault survivors.

If you are an abuse survivor who wants to breastfeed, I congratulate you for making a positive life choice to overcome your past and parent well. However, there still may be some difficulties you face as you breastfeed your baby or child. If you are having a difficult time, here are some suggestions that might help:

- Figure out what makes you uncomfortable – Is it nighttime feeding? Is it your baby touching other parts of your body while nursing? Is it when the baby attaches to your breast? Or all of the above? The intense physical contact of breastfeeding may be very uncomfortable for you. You



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#### The Bedtime Challenge



By Sonya Fehér, Mamatrue.com  
Bedtime is one of the most challenging times of day for me as a parent. I am tired from having taking care of a little person all day, ready to cuddle with ...

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might find breastfeeding painful, because your abuse experience lowered your pain threshold. The act of breastfeeding may also trigger flashbacks.

- Can you address the problem? – If skin-to-skin contact is bothering you, can you put a towel or cloth between you and the baby? Can you avoid the feedings that make you uncomfortable? Nighttime feedings are often good candidates. Would you be more comfortable if you pumped and fed your baby with a bottle? Can you hold your baby's other hand while breastfeeding to keep her from touching your body? Can you distract yourself while breastfeeding with TV or a book? Several mothers have shared with me that works well for them. Experiment, be flexible, and find out what helps.
- Remember that some breastfeeding is better than none – You may not be able to fully breastfeed, but every little bit helps, even if you must pump milk and use a bottle or if you are only breastfeeding once a day. Some abuse survivors find that they never love breastfeeding, but they learn to tolerate it. And that may be a more realistic goal for you.

Past abuse does not have to influence the rest of your life. I know many abuse survivors who have become wonderful mothers. I'm confident that you can, too. Nurturing your baby through breastfeeding is a great place to start.

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By Rita Brhel, editor of The Attached Family  
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By Rita Brhel, editor of The Attached Family  
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By Judy Arnall, author of Discipline without Distress, ProfessionalParenting.ca  
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By Rita Brhel, editor of The Attached Family  
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By Rita Brhel, editor of The Attached Family  
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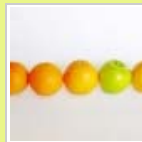
#### Attention API Members

Attachment Parenting International is grateful to those who contribute to its publications, including TheAttachedFamily.com. It is to be noted that API entertains a variety of perspectives and embraces opportunities to challenge and strengthen its API family. Please find what works for you, support and encourage, and leave the rest behind. For more on API's perspective on parenting, visit the API website by clicking on the link in the Additional API Resources below.

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#### additional api resources

- API book
- API Forums & API Reads book club
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- API local support groups
- API's Eight Principles of Parenting

#### api news & events

- API Responds to TIME Magazine Article/Infant Suffocation Deaths Prompt Recall of Amby Baby Motion Beds/Hammocks
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- Tennessee Moms Relax: Expert says Keep Baby Close At Night
- "API's 8 Principles of Parenting" Now Available!
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- Keeping Balance with a Natural Life
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- Christmas and Crisis
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