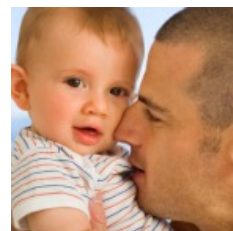




Separated Parents and Breastfeeding Baby

My wife and I separated during her pregnancy and she has custody of the baby. I would like to set up a visitation schedule with my baby. Is this possible with a breastfeeding infant?



You are off to an excellent start as a parent by recognizing your child's need to breastfeed as a top priority at this time. Ideally, you will be able to work with the baby's mother to create a visitation schedule that allows for this need, rather than relying on a courtmandated arrangement that might be less favorable.

The best visitation schedule starts with the length and frequency of separations from the mother that your baby already experiences, and gradually lengthens as time passes. If the mother doesn't work outside the home and breastfeeds on demand, you will need to begin with frequent, brief visits (perhaps visiting the child for an hour before work, during lunch, or after work on appointed days, preferably in the mother's home).

If he is accustomed to longer separations with a caregiver, you can take the caregiver's place for the same length of time. As you increase the number and length of your visits with your child, discuss with his mother the possibility of using a bottle to feed him breast milk she has expressed with a pump or by hand—and keep in mind that you will be able to feed him other foods after he is six months old.

Once you have reached this stage and feedings are spaced apart more, it becomes easier for you to go out with your child for a brief time. Eventually he will be able to happily stay overnight and on weekends with you.

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