“This was a long journey for our hospital and having the guidance from the CBGI team and the quality improvement team through the ENRICH Carolinas grant was instrumental in helping us achieve this designation. I would encourage any birthing facility working toward this designation to take advantage of the wonderful support that they can provide.”
– Karen Woody, RN, IBCLC, Frye Regional Medical Center

“On behalf of WIC, thank you for continuing to offer RSB online.”
– Brian Matthews, MPH, RD, LDN, IBCLC, Davidson County WIC Director

“The presenters were wonderful at helping me problem solve and are willing to help find the answers and the help I need to better our policy! Thank you all!”
– Jennie Ogden, The Little School of Orange County
Friends and Colleagues,

The Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute (CGBI) is continuously striving for excellence in research, service and training in the areas of breastfeeding and lactation in all its forms, optimal birthing practices and birth spacing. While conducting the programmatic work featured in this report, our formative work to develop new research ideas and to provide service to internal and external stakeholders continues.

Over the years CGBI has highlighted activities and work for our stakeholders via our social media platforms, website and quarterly newsletter, the Breastfeeding Exclusive (BFE), started by the late Dr. Miriam Labbok, founding director of CGBI. This document serves as our inaugural Annual Report, highlighting our funded programmatic work. CGBI has continued to execute and excel in program implementation despite dealing with, and adapting to, the COVID-19 pandemic. Our team has demonstrated great resiliency over the course of the pandemic, creating novel approaches to help address the solutions in moving to a new normal.

This year, CGBI will build on the successes and opportunities of 2021, and ensure alignment with the Gillings School of Global Public Health’s Inclusive Excellence plan. We are excited to enter a collaborative, strategic planning journey to revisit our mission, vision and core values. We are grateful for the various funders who have actively contributed to our work through financial and technical support.

Our team of talented and passionate changemakers has worked incredibly hard to serve a variety of partners, domestically and globally. Please enjoy our 2021 Annual Report.

– Catherine Sullivan, MPH, RDN, LDN, IBCLC, RLC, FAND, Assistant Professor and Director
Mary Rose Tully Training Initiative (MRT-TI)

By May 2021, the 13 students in the 2020-2021 cohort of the MRT-TI program completed over 300 hours of clinical practice and over 95 hours of lactation education, making them eligible to sit for the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant exam. For the first time in MRT-TI’s history, four international students completed the program, representing China, Ghana and Malaysia.

A Pathway 2 Lactation Consultant Training Program, MRT-TI is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs upon recommendation of the Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee. Our program attracts students from a variety of backgrounds, including public health, advocacy, nutrition, nursing, medicine, birth work (doulas), pharmacy, social work and global health.

We are grateful for our partnerships with our clinical sites at UNC Medical Center, WakeMed, Piedmont Health, and Women’s Birth and Wellness Center. Preceptors provide countless hours of volunteer service to our program, while imparting knowledge and mentorship. Our students demonstrated growth and resiliency during unprecedented COVID-19 circumstances, preparing them for lactation work domestically and globally.

Through contributions of generous donors, including Douglas and Annamarie Tully, the program has provided three scholarships per cohort to balance the costs of the practicum fee.

https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/lactation-consultant-training
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

RISE: Lactation Training Model

Over the last few years, RISE: Lactation Training Model has assisted Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) in Charlotte, NC, and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (NCAT) in Greensboro, NC, establish accredited Pathway 2 Lactation Consultant Programs. JCSU’s Pathway 2 Lactation Program has had two cohorts that have completed their training. NCAT graduated their inaugural cohort of 11 students in 2021.

One of the goals of RISE is to provide technical assistance to historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and other colleges and universities serving Black, Indigenous and People of Color by creating sustainable lactation training programs that will serve communities of color well into the future. Recognizing that these academic homes are a part of the fabric of their community and are leading efforts to train a future workforce, we cherish this role as a helper group.

In 2021, RISE assisted these schools with funding, marketing and technical support toward sustainability — both JCSU and NCAT have successfully expanded their grant funding to help grow their programs. Alexis Woods Barr, PhD, a postdoctoral research associate at CGBI, has developed evaluation tools that will engage student and program personnel in sharing their experiences with starting lactation programs.

Funding for RISE: Lactation Training Model provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

In 2021, ENRICH Carolinas welcomed five new birthing facilities into our program, a huge feat given the dire situation that most birthing facilities experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **This increases the total ENRICH Carolinas birthing facilities to 51.**

We are grateful to all our participating birthing facilities willing to commit to a project focused on improving their maternity care practices and breastfeeding rates by implementing the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative’s *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.*

The ENRICH Carolinas team served more than 180 participants in our quarterly webinars, more than 160 participants in our annual Learning Collaborative Meeting, 49 participants in prenatal clinic lunch and learns, and 420 participants in Ready Set Baby Live Zoom prenatal education classes in 2021.

*The Duke Endowment is the primary funder for ENRICH Carolinas. Based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, The Endowment is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has distributed more than $4 billion in grants. The Endowment shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but all are separate organizations.*

[https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/enrich-carolinas](https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/enrich-carolinas)
During the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to offer the Ready, Set, Baby curriculum live via Zoom, assisting more than 420 pregnant, birthing and postpartum families in 2021. These weekly classes included prenatal, birthing, postpartum, and COVID-19-guidance information.

The mission of Ready, Set, Baby is to provide free evidence-based prenatal lactation education in a user-friendly format that can be implemented consistently across multiple clinics and providers. Ready, Set, Baby materials include information for birthing facilities working toward Step 3 of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding.

Ready, Set, Baby is a set of free resources used for prenatal counseling on lactation and optimal maternity care practices that consists of a patient booklet and an educator flip chart. Our booklets are available in English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Chinese and, new in 2021, Nepalese and Burmese. We’re improving the Chinese version and working on a Mongolian translation.

In 2021, we added topic-specific one-page downloadable PDFs that offer bite-size information for busy clinic visits. The program also added a Spanish and Arabic translation to the companion website, Ready, Set, Baby Online — a collaboration with the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

Ready, Set, Baby was originally created with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Support for revisions and virtual classes is provided as a part of the ENRICH Carolinas project funded by The Duke Endowment.

https://www.readysetbabyonline.com
https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/ready-set-baby-live-online-classes
With a goal of integrating the childcare industry into the infrastructure of lactation support, CGBI released the Continuity of Care (CoC) Toolkit in the summer of 2021. To truly support families in achieving their lactation goals, a focus on CoC is critical and occurs when consistent messaging is shared between early care and education (ECE) professionals, health care providers and families.

We shipped CoC Toolkits to more than 50 birthing facilities participating in ENRICH Carolinas this year. This toolkit includes job aides for health care providers that help guide conversations with families as they navigate lactation in licensed childcare.

We hope this toolkit is a steppingstone to further developing the intersection of health care and ECE lactation support.

https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/resources-continuity-of-care-toolkit
2021 brought the launch of a 10-part series of early care and education (ECE) workforce development “learning bursts” that align with CGBI’s Ten Steps for Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care and offer guidance on their implementation. The program’s reach included:

- **45 NC childcare programs serving nearly 2,500 children**
- **100 live participants cumulative**
- **56 counties and one tribal boundary** (Technical Assistants provided statewide coverage, allowing for greater reach of Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care implementation)

CGBI partnered with Buncombe Partnership for Children, Breastfeed Durham, Orange County Smart Start, Wake County Smart Start and Child Care Services Association to provide virtual monthly sessions on the Building Blocks of Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care. “Learning burst” topics included creating a breastfeeding policy, communicating with enrolled families, designing a lactation space and applying for the NC Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Designation.

Each session offered one NC Division of Child Development and Early Education contact hour for ECE professionals.
**EMPower Best Practices**

An exciting 4-year project, EMPower Best Practices launched in 2021. Built on two previous initiatives — EMPower Breastfeeding and EMPower Training — EMPower Best Practices provides birthing facilities the tools to ensure that care policies and evidence-based maternity practices are implemented safely and equitably for each parent and their infant. **More than 125 birthing facilities nationwide have enrolled to participate.**

EMPower Best Practices provides these birthing facilities with comprehensive training materials, tools and resources. We help them build a tailored, sustainable training plan, and our experienced breastfeeding and quality improvement experts provide support through ongoing technical assistance and peer-to-peer learning.

The EMPower team has been busy with project planning and resource development for most of the year. We kicked-off the project with an orientation webinar for participating facilities in early December. In 2022, we will offer training opportunities and individualized coaching for participating facilities.

*The initiative is implemented by Abt Associates in partnership with the Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute and Population Health Improvement Partners. EMPower Best Practices is funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity.*

[https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/empower](https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/empower)
Lactation and Infant Feeding in Emergencies (L.I.F.E.) Initiative

In 2021, the L.I.F.E. Initiative, a hub for research, technical assistance, health communications, policy, advocacy and training for infant and young child feeding in emergencies, contributed to several CGBI programs. This includes adapting our standardized Ready, Set, Baby curriculum to include timely COVID guidance, providing virtual education for more than 420 families.

The L.I.F.E. Initiative also supported ENRICH Carolinas coaching teams in answering emergent questions related to COVID-19 policy guidance and breastfeeding. The L.I.F.E. Initiative taught a 4-hour Basic Skills Course for Supporting Lactation and Infant Feeding in Emergencies for MRT-TI and students in programs supported by R.I.S.E.: Lactation Training Model funding. The Gillings on the Ground Disaster Response Training Programs certification now includes L.I.F.E. Initiative training.

In 2022, the L.I.F.E. Initiative will take part in the American Red Cross volunteer shelter simulation training, in partnership with the University of North Carolina Wilmington and New Hanover County Emergency Management, and Health and Human Services.

https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/covid-19-resources
Couplet Care Bassinet

In 2021, the Couplet Care Bassinet™ was licensed from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to Couplet Care, LLC, which is a company Dr. Kristin Tully founded to commercialize the device. She serves as Chief Scientist. Couplet Care is led by CEO Stacie McEntyre, with a board of experienced entrepreneurs and regulatory consultants.

The bassinet received a U.S. patent, and six international patents are pending. Couplet Care won the inaugural Carolina Angel Network pitch competition in December 2021.

Couplet Care was awarded a UNC Kickstart grant to support a Small Business Innovation Research Phase 2 application to the National Institutes of Health. As of February 2022, the team awaits a funding decision for the competitively scored application. This proposed work would build upon the successful SBIR Phase I award, which included a usability pilot trial with 52 mother-infant pairs at North Carolina Women’s Hospital. Findings indicate that the Couplet Care bassinet was helpful for new families, with multiple significant patient-reported results from their inpatient experiences. Gratitude for Dr. Amanda Thompson for her leadership and oversight of the SBIR Phase I pilot trial.

Couplet Care is raising funds for design for manufacture and to establish inventory for sales, which are planned for early 2023.

https://sph.unc.edu/cgbi/hospital_infant_bassinet

https://coupletcare.com
RECOGNITIONS

Awards

**Bernard G. Greenberg Alumni Endowment Award**
Catherine Sullivan, MPH, RD, LDN, IBCLC, FAND, director and assistant professor, Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute

*The Bernard G. Greenberg Alumni Endowment Award, established in 1986 by the School’s alumni association, is presented to an outstanding full-time, mid-career Gillings School faculty member for excellence in the areas of teaching, research and service.*

**Gillings Faculty Award for Excellence in Health Equity Research**
Aunchalee Palmquist, PhD, MA, IBCLC, assistant professor of maternal and child health, Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute

*The Gillings Health Equity Faculty Research Award recognizes faculty who demonstrate excellence in research that has made a substantial impact on improved equitable outcomes or sustained reduction in inequities in a pressing public health issue.*

**Gillings Staff Excellence Award**
Julia Bourg, BSN, RN, IBCLC, social/clinical research specialist, Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute

*This annual award and recognition is given to employees who exemplify outstanding work, as measured by excellent attitude, leadership and outstanding initiative.*
“The coaches have been a wealth of knowledge. The webinars are great. Overall a very positive experience with ENRICH.”
— ENRICH Carolinas participant

“They’ve not only given me the resources, but talking with me about how to implement the changes has been helpful. They kind of oversee. Jacquana might say how about you try something like this. I can bounce ideas off of her. That’s been really, really helpful.”
— Laura Baisch, BSN, RN, CLC, ENRICH Project Team Lead for Conway Medical Center
PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Presentations


**Alison M. Stuebe**. “Establishing the 4th Trimester” and “Evidence-Based Updates on the First Week of Exclusive Breastfeeding among Infants > 35 Weeks Gestation.” Australia/New Zealand Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine Virtual Conference. February 2021.


**Alison M. Stuebe.** “Establishing the 4th Trimester.” Stony Brook University School of Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology Grand Rounds. October 2021.

**Aunchalee Palmquist.** “Advancing Health Equity Solutions at UNC.” UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health. November 12, 2021.

PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

Publications


Our Team

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*Julissa Thompson, BA, CLC, IBCLC, Graduate Research Assistant  
*Kendall Toewe, BS, Accounting Technician  
Alexis Woods Barr, PhD, MS, BS, Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Kathryn Wouk, PhD, MS, IBCLC, Postdoctoral Research Fellow  

With gratitude to Thea Calhoun, Eliana Mundul, Gigi Lawless, Abigail Smetana and Jacquana Smith who left us in 2021 to pursue new opportunities. We consider them to be an integral part of our past success.

*New to CGBI in 2021.
“The resources look fantastic — very straightforward, practical, and approachable. I think childcare operators and families will really benefit from these. And the Breastfeeding Supported Here! posters are beautiful!”
— Julie Sundermann, MPH, RDN, LDN, Nutrition, Training, and Policy Consultant, CACFP

“So interesting to see the historical perspective for breastfeeding women.”
— Tammy Woolley, WakeMed Cary Hospital
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