



BREASTFEEDING OBSERVATION ASSESSMENT TOOL (BOAT)

(Please complete at the first visit. This resource may also be used at subsequent visits. Always use a colour version)

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Mother's Name:	Baby's Name:		ASSESSMENT PERFORMED BY:	
Address:	Date of Birth:		Assessment	Reassessment
Tel:	Baby's Age:		Name:	
Mother's Date of Birth:	Baby's Birth Weight:		Signature:	
Type of Birth:	Baby's Current Weight:		Public Health Nurse /Registered Midwife (PHN / RM)	
Verbal Consent Given:	Yes	No	Date:	

How to use the BOAT		GREEN BOX - Effective Breastfeeding	AMBER BOX - Suggestive of a Breastfeeding Challenge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An eLearning training programme is available on HSEland at: www.hseland.ie, Module Name: Supporting Early Breastfeeding The Guideline on the Observation of a Breastfeed & Use of the Breastfeeding Observation Assessment Tool (BOAT) Resource is available on the HSE website Observe the baby breastfeeding (following mother's verbal consent) and ensure correct positioning and attachment of baby to the breast. Complete the BOAT resource, at the first visit, by asking or observing all points in the white column on page 2. Mark the findings in the white column at assessment/reassessment (page 2) Effective breastfeeding is indicated if all boxes in the green column on page 2 are ticked. Please then go to Green Box (opposite). If the amber column on page 2 has boxes ticked, it suggests a challenge with breastfeeding. Please then go to Amber Box (opposite). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue breastfeeding with PHN / RM support. Encourage attendance at local breastfeeding support groups. Information on local breastfeeding supports, facilitated by the HSE and voluntary breastfeeding groups is available at mychild.ie 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is an underlying medical issue for mother or baby the PHN / RM refers to the GP. If there is a breastfeeding challenge the PHN / RM develops a care plan, takes corrective action, and refers to breastfeeding support group. The PHN / RM revisits, and repeats the BOAT based on clinical judgement. The PHN / RM continues corrective action until the breastfeeding challenge resolves. If the challenge is not resolved the PHN / RM consults with or refers to a specialist breastfeeding professional (IBCLC) & includes BOAT. 	

Day	Wet Nappies	Dirty Nappies (Moihrbacher and Kendall Tackett, 2010, p.92)
1	1 wet nappy + (over 24 hours)	1 stool (black)+
2	2 wet nappies +	2 stools (black)+
3	3 wet nappies +	3 stools (black or greenish)+
4	4 wet nappies +	3 - 4 stools (greenish or yellowish)+
5	5 wet nappies +	Stools should turn yellow
6 days - 6 weeks	6 wet nappies + (pale, yellow or clear urine)	3 - 8 stools + (yellow, seedy, runny to loose) daily
6 weeks - 6 months		3 - 5 stools + (daily but may skip days). (Yellow, soft may thicken over time because of milk compositional changes) (Wambach and Riordan, 2016, p.295)

(1) Percentage Weight Loss Calculation: Weight Loss ÷ Birth Weight x 100 = % Weight Loss • **Example:** Weight Loss = 226g. Birth Weight = 3500g. $226 \div 3500 \times 100 = 6.45\%$ Weight Loss

What to Observe / Ask About	Green Column - Answer Indicating Effective Breastfeeding	Assessment	Re-assessment	Amber Column - Answer Suggestive of a Breastfeeding Challenge	Assessment	Re-assessment
Mother's name: DOB: Baby's name: DOB:	Mother looks healthy. Mother is relaxed and comfortable. There is good eye contact between mother and baby.			Mother looks ill or unwell. Mother looks tense or uncomfortable. There is no eye contact between mother and baby.		
Baby's wet nappies	Refer to wet nappies section page 1.			Refer to wet nappies section page 1.		
Appearance and frequency of baby's stools	Refer to dirty nappies section page 1.			Refer to dirty nappies section page 1.		
Baby's colour, alertness and tone	Baby may have evidence of normal physiological jaundice; Baby is alert; Baby has good tone.			Baby's jaundice is worsening or not improving; Baby is lethargic; not waking to feed; Baby has poor tone.		
Weight of baby (following initial post birth loss)	Baby's weight loss is <10% of birth weight. (To record % weight loss see percentage weight loss calculation section page 1). It is expected that babies will regain their birth weight by day 14.			Baby's weight loss is >10% of birth weight. (To record % weight loss see percentage weight loss calculation section page 1). Birth weight is not regained by day 14.		
Number of breastfeeds in the last 24 hours	Baby breastfeeds on demand, or is fed responsively according to early feeding cues, with at least 8-12 feeds in a 24 hour period.			Baby had fewer than 8 breastfeeds in the last 24 hour period.		
Baby's behaviour during the breastfeed	Baby is generally relaxed and calm.			The baby is unsettled during the breastfeed, or refuses to breastfeed.		
Sucking pattern during the breastfeed	Initial rapid sucks changing to slower sucks with pauses and audible regular soft swallowing (may be less audible until milk comes in).			No change in sucking pattern, presence of noisy feeding (e.g. clicking).		
Type of breastfeed	Baby feeds actively from first breast until satisfied.			Baby is unsatisfied despite regular breastfeeds.		
Offer of second breast	Second breast offered as recommended when establishing milk supply. Baby feeds from second breast or not, according to appetite.			Mother restricts the baby to one breast per feed.		
End of the breastfeed	Baby lets go spontaneously, or does so when breast is gently lifted.			Baby does not release the breast spontaneously, Mother removes the baby.		
Baby's behaviour after a breastfeed	Baby is content after most feeds.			Baby is unsettled after breastfeeding.		
Shape of nipples at the end of the breastfeed	The nipples are rounded similar to when the breastfeed began or the nipples may be slightly elongated.			Nipples are misshapen or pinched at the end of the breastfeed.		
Mother's report on her nipples and breasts	Nipples and breasts are comfortable.			Nipples are sore or damaged, breasts are uncomfortable.		
Observation of the mother's nipples and breasts	Nipples are intact. Breasts are comfortable with no redness, lumps or areas of tenderness.			Nipples may be infected, have symptoms of thrush or vasospasm. Mother's breasts may be engorged or have signs of mastitis. Yes (state which).		
Use of dummy, nipple shields / formula?	None used.			Yes (state which) ask why:		

(Content adapted by the HSE Breastfeeding Implementation Group, from the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative's Breastfeeding Assessment Tool and Dublin North Local Health Organisation's BOAT)