

# Card Sort Tool

## Overview

Looking for a tool that gets to the “heart of the matter” easily and quickly? Try the Card Sort. Early adopters rave about this tool because it identifies parental interests and concerns in less than a minute. It is especially effective with clients who are hesitant or unwilling to share any concerns or topics.

Each Card Sort tool contains a wide variety of common parental concerns. There is a different card deck for each of these groups: pregnant mothers, breastfeeding mothers, non-breastfeeding women, infants 6-12 months and children ages 1-2 and 2-5 years.

Ask clients to quickly sort through the cards, grouping them into three piles: “never a problem,” “sometimes a problem” and “always a problem.” Educators can quickly review the card piles to recognize successes from the “never a problem” pile as well as identify topics for discussion from the “always a problem” pile.

## Objectives

Use the Card Sort tool to identify parental concerns and interests. The Card Sort tool can also be used to recognize successes.

## Activities

1. Select the appropriate Card Deck Tool for each client based on the child’s age or the mother’s pregnancy or feeding choice.
2. After greeting the mom warmly, ask the parent to sort through the card deck, placing the cards into three groups: “never a problem,” “sometimes a problem” and “always a problem.”
3. If time permits, begin by looking at the “never a problem” pile. It is likely parents are not concerned about topics in this pile because they have been successful in maneuvering that common challenge in the past. Use this opportunity to recognize successes.
4. If pressed for time, go first to the “always a problem” pile. Identify the most pressing parental concern or interest by asking questions like these: “Which of these interests is the most important to you?” or “I want our conversation to be a good investment of your time today. Which of these concerns is most pressing for you?”
5. To engage emotionally, start by asking how the mother feels about the identified topic.
6. Discuss the identified interest or concern.
7. Ask the mother to share actions she has already taken or questions she has about the identified concern or interest.
8. Ask permission to share additional tips. Position tips as coming from successful mothers for greater influence.
9. Continue addressing topics identified, as time permits. Note topics that were not discussed in the client chart for future conversations.

“With tools like this, we can reach people at a deeper level and affect more lives.”

Meghan, MA WIC State  
Breastfeeding Coordinator

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## Adaptations

The Card Sort Tool can be used with groups as well as individuals. Give each group participant a set of cards that corresponds to their child's age, pregnancy or feeding choice. Provide directions on how to use the Card Sort and ask them to sort their cards into three piles: "never a problem," "sometimes a problem" and "always a problem." After the group members have completed this task, process the responses in either of these ways:

- Ask clients to share their greatest concern or interest from their card sort. Ask group members to share practical tips that would help the mother solve the problem. Contribute important but unmentioned tips after group members have shared.
- Ask clients to share their greatest concern or interest from their card sort. Record their response on poster board or paper. After all have shared their interests, go around the room, asking parents to share practical tips on each topic.