Share this:

Jeanette O'Neill, IBCLC, RLC, LCCE

Breastfeeding, Social Justice, and Equity

Paige Hall Smith, Miriam Labbok, and Brittany D. Chambers, Praeclarus Press © 2017, 482 pages, paperback, \$28.95

Available from: <http://stores.praeclaruspress.com/breastfeeding-social-justice-and-equity/>

Breastfeeding, Social Justice, and Equity is a compilation of research expertly placed in order to open the reader's eyes, offer statistics to acknowledge the scope of the disparity, and implore the reader to take action in their community and the world.

This book is ideal for anyone who recognizes that there is a problem with equity in American healthcare, wants to actively learn about the underlying issues, and seeks to improve them. Whether the reader works in healthcare, government, nonprofit, or the business sector, this book will enlighten through its broad range of topics that when laid side by side, shows the depth of the inequity.

"Eliminating health disparities requires addressing the causes of inequality and social suffering" (p. 25). The health disparities in the United States are no more clearly manifest than in the rates of maternal mortality and morbidity rates, "with Black women being three-to-four times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than White women" (p. 57). When giving such

staggering figures, this book also offers context and a lifeline for ways to enact change. There are strategies for healthcare workers to best support women who've experienced intimate partner violence as well as a 12-point action plan that North Carolina adapted and implemented as their state's perinatal health strategic plan. While many people understand the health and societal benefits of breastfeeding, this book outlines an expansive cost/benefit analysis that demonstrates—despite the increased costs of comprehensive lactation support—a higher breastfeeding rate is a significant cost-saving measure for Medicaid. This information becomes a change agent when put in the hands of those in power who make policy and for those who discover their own power to create new policy.

Whether the reader can positively impact the life of one mother and child or has the ability to influence millions of mothers and children, *Breastfeeding, Social Justice, and Equity* has the information to act as the catalyst to create change—change in perspective, in action, in policy and, hopefully, in equity.

Jeanette O'Neill, IBCLC, RLC, LCCE, began her career as a television sports journalist. After the birth of her first daughter in 2008, Jeanette experienced first hand the difference that supportive lactation care makes in a new mom's life. Just when she thought she was a breastfeeding pro, she gave birth to twin daughters in 2010 and again sought lactation support. Jeanette met her breastfeeding goals and decided to pay it forward to other moms. She served on the board of her local Mothers of Multiples Club, supported collegiate women as an advisor for her sorority Alpha Delta Pi, and facilitated a group for underserved pregnant women called Baby Basics Mom's Club. Jeanette currently works as a lactation consultant at Novant Health Presbyterian Hospital in Charlotte, NC.