

Jessica's Story - Bottle-refusal stresses a new mom returning to work and ultimately feeding success

" Knowing that my maternity leave was ending in two weeks, I started introducing the bottle to my son. We had used the bottle with pumped breast milk when he was younger but never consistently because I was concerned about nipple confusion. My son refused the bottle with much protest and we tried everything! I knew that I had to seek out help.

A Google search led me towards Luna Lactation and services provided by Melissa. I sent her an email and pleaded my case, all the while believing that I may be doomed. She emailed me back within 24 hours and we scheduled an appointment. She was welcoming, encouraging, and even let my mother and father come in for the first consultation.

Melissa observed my son breastfeed, asked about his breastfeeding history, and then did a thorough evaluation of my son. She asked questions about how he breastfed and educated me on what she thought might be the problem. After assessing my son's mouth, she confirmed her thoughts – Mason had tight/rigid frenulums (tongue tied). All my breastfeeding woes/issues finally made some sense, as most of these issues were caused by his tongue-tie. She recommended seeing an ENT to talk about clipping the frenulums to improve breastfeeding and to ultimately improve success with bottle-feeding. She supplied evidence-based materials that led us to the decision of getting his frenulums clipped.

We went outside of our provider network to see an ENT specialist that she suggested and had them clipped a week after our first consult. Breastfeeding went some much smoother within hours and even better within days. We had a follow up consult with Melissa about 1 week later to work on bottle feeding and to go over exercises necessary to keep the frenulums from reattaching.

My son didn't take the bottle before I started working, but after much practice with exercises and introducing the bottle in friendly ways, my son took the bottle from my mom on my first day at work. My mom called me (while I was pumping), to inform me that Mason had finally taken the bottle – 3 hours after I had last fed him. Thanks to Melissa's' guidance and instruction, Mason is still an awesome breast feeder and continues to take the bottle when I am unavailable. Thank you Melissa for peace of mind and for your help". –JWK, Portland, OR

Note from Melissa Cole, IBCLC : Mason and his family were a joy to work with. Some families may never think of calling a lactation consultant when their baby refuses a bottle but I actually encounter this feeding dilemma quite a lot! With bottle refusal there is almost always an underlying issue to identify and it can take a bit of detective work to get there. Also, bottle refusal can be stressful for parents when they have to return to work; support feeding strategies and creative troubleshooting can help immensely!