

The Future of Black Breastfeeding

Resource Guide





There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns.

- OCTAVIA BUTLER

Introduction

When I think about Octavia Butler, I can't help but think about what it means to envision a new future. Not only did Octavia Butler reshape literature, she created worlds where Black liberation could exist. The act of envisioning a new future is a radical one, and it's an act that has helped our ancestors survive over generations.

What can we imagine that is completely outside our current situation? What can we envision for ourselves outside of the daily harm and violence that we experience as Black people everyday?





When I founded [Queen & Baby](#), I knew that the resources available for mothers, especially Black mothers, needed to be reimagined. Right now, Black babies are dying at twice the rate (in some places, nearly triple) the rate of white babies. And there are even more issues; from high rates of diet-related disease, lack of diversity in the lactation field, and even more barriers; the need to envision a new future of support and uplifting for all parents is great.

You might have [read my story](#) and learned how my experience as a Black breastfeeding mother led me to build Queen & Baby. Building this company is my radical act. It is my opportunity to bring inspiration and hope to my community. And the wonderful thing is that I'm not doing this work alone. There is so much being done right now for us and by us to improve breastfeeding outcomes.



In this guide you'll find just a few of these incredible changemakers and revolutionaries. It's my duty to support and highlight the work of others. There are resources here for you, for me, for us. Our history has shown us that out of necessity comes innovation, and I'm excited to share the innovative ways Black women are imagining solutions, spotlighting our stories, and advocating for better maternal health for all of us.

This guide is for you. I hope you feel seen and supported. I hope you continue reimagining a different future alongside me.



01 Okionu Birth Foundation



The Okionu Birth Foundation, founded by Jacquelyn Clemmons, supports entire families by connecting them to the help and services they need, right when they need it. Jacquelyn is a birth and traditional postpartum doula, certified breastfeeding specialist, and author. She's spent the past 20 years helping families from various backgrounds and ethnicities get the care they need as they experience the joys of birth and the challenges of nursing.

Okionu Birth Foundation provides a unique meal provision and group support model for parents in low-income BIPOC families for six weeks after their baby is born. The first forty days after birth are one of the most important time frames for new families. It's a time where nourishment and wellness are of the utmost importance. Okionu Birth Foundation provides proper care, deep nourishment, and community support, to help BIPOC families experience their births and postpartum seasons in a positive way.

[OKIONU BIRTH FOUNDATION](#) →

Mae: A Digital Health Platform



Mae was founded on a belief that all women deserve an equal possibility of a safe pregnancy and giving their babies a healthy start. A belief that with access to the right knowledge and support – a trusted space – that we can all approach this life stage from a place of empowerment. This is why Mae Founder, Maya, created a trusted, digital-first health platform in which the level of care for Black women is prioritized.

Maya is a healthcare technologist who has been in the industry for 15 years, building solutions to improve health outcomes. She is also a Black mom to three little girls. In this extraordinary moment in time, like so many of us, she felt a calling to apply her heart and energy to something that has the potential to drive real change.

[MAE: A DIGITAL HEALTH PLATFORM](#) →

03

Birth Class in A Box



Ashlee Johnson, Founder of Birth Class in a Box, is a licensed childbirth educator, teaching expectant parents about the labor and birth process, interventions and alternatives and helps them better understand the physical and emotional changes they will undergo. She also shares her expertise and resources with doulas so they can better impact maternal health outcomes. She created Birth Class In a Box around her own method called E.N.T.E.R., which stands for: “engage in the process; nurture yourself and baby; take control of the process; exercise and practice; and relax and reduce stress.” Through the Birth Class in a Box Ashlee has helped many doulas make a greater impact on maternal health outcomes, engage birthing partners, and save their own time, money, & energy.

[BIRTH CLASS IN A BOX](#) →

04

The Melanated Mammary Atlas



The Melanated Mammary Atlas was born out of the need to expand the representation of breast conditions on melanated skin in health education. By and large, the images that aspiring medical professionals see during their training are of fair skinned breasts with pink nipples. Not only is this inconsistent with the pigmentation of most of the people on this planet, it creates a gap in acumen that shows up in the care and assessment of patients of color.

The Melanated Mammary Atlas was founded by [Nekisha Killings MPH IBCLC](#), an equity strategist and maternal and child health advocate who speaks, teaches, and facilitates on topics related to equity and dismantling bias across various sectors. She acts as a Director of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and consults organizations on creating and implementing strategies to better support marginalized communities. Nekisha penned the chapter titled Cultural Humility in the latest Core Curriculum for Interdisciplinary Lactation Care.

THE MELANATED MAMMARY ATLAS —————>

05 Nurse Nikki at Bloom Maternal Health



Nikki Greenaway is a nurse practitioner and 'lactivist' using her genuine passion for providing reproductive health and education to serve families and communities.

Nikki is Board Certified Family Nurse Practitioner, International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, mama of 3, and creator of Bloom Maternal Health. Bloom Health provides families with the support and care they need, when they need it most. They offer pregnancy check-ins, postpartum care visits and reproductive health after-care.

Their goal is to improve maternal and child health disparities changing the way families receive maternal care. It's through this work that Nikki is helping families and communities survive, thrive, and BLOOM.

[NURSE NIKKI AT BLOOM MATERNAL HEALTH](#) →

006

Lauren J. Turner Fine Art



Lauren J. Turner combines her love for art and birth to celebrate our individual experiences around parenthood. Through her art she encourages healthy conversation around birth and lactation. During her postpartum with her second child, she reflected on why both of her births went so differently. During her second pregnancy, Lauren was dealing with stress and negativity that carried into her labor experience. Lauren believes that birthing our children is a connection between mind, spirit and body. It is not just about getting the baby out. Birth, for her, was also about teamwork and working with my physical body to deliver her daughter. Birth was also a reality check and this made her passionate about helping other women. During her postpartum period, Lauren began to look into birth art. Those beautiful images of women birthing, created a fire inside of her.

[LAUREN J. TURNER FINE ART](#) ———>

07 Parenting for Liberation



Parenting for Liberation: A Guidebook for Raising Black Children, written by [Trina Greene Brown](#), fills a critical gap in currently available, timely parenting resources. Rooted in an Afrofuturistic vision of connectivity and inspiration, the community created within this book works to imagine a world that amplifies Black girl magic and Black boy joy, and everything in between. This book speaks directly to parents raising Black children in a world of racialized violence, by combining powerful storytelling with practical exercises, encouraging readers to imagine methods of parenting rooted in liberation rather than fear.

In 2016, activist and mother Trina Greene Brown created the virtual multimedia platform Parenting for Liberation to connect, inspire, and uplift Black parents. Now in her book, she pairs personal anecdotes with open-ended reflective prompts; together, they help readers dismantle harmful narratives about the Black family and imagine anti-oppressive parenting methods.

PARENTING FOR LIBERATION →

08

Irth App

The Irth App (like Birth, without the “B”) is the only app where you can find prenatal, birthing, postpartum and pediatric reviews of care from other Black and brown women. The Irth App is the #1 “Yelp-like” platform for the pregnancy and new motherhood journey, made by and for people of color. Search doctor and hospital reviews from your community and leave reviews to help inform and protect others.

Kimberly Seals Allers, award-winning journalist turned speaker and advocate, built the Irth App because she’s focused on advocating for equity in maternal and infant health. She knew that people are not being treated the same way at the same place and that Black women have been paying the highest price because of these inequities. Until now, Black and brown parents and people from all marginalized groups had no way of seeing reviews of care from other people of color as a front-end tool for choosing an ob-gyn, birthing hospital or pediatrician. Now that’s changed, bringing us all one step closer to bringing equity to pregnancy and childbirth for every Black and brown mama and baby.

[IRTH APP](#) →



09

Birth Stories in Color

Birth Stories in Color (BSiC) is a podcast for Black, Indigenous, Asian, Latino and Multiracial individuals to share their birthing experiences. BSiC is a space that specifically celebrates, mourns with and supports them and their transformation through birth.

Founded by Laurel Gourrier and Danielle M. Jackson, BSiC emphasizes the role of storytelling as a way to equip future parents. Listening to real birth stories is one way to discover the expected and unexpected parts of the journey.

Laurel and Danielle are both birthworkers and realized that there are birth stories that are not being heard. Their hope is that all who share and listen find this platform to be a community near and far, and an invaluable resource for navigating their own journey.

[BIRTH STORIES IN COLOR](#) —————>



Get Involved

Queen & Baby seeks to improve breastfeeding outcomes leading to healthier mothers and babies by providing affordable, on-demand access to lactation care when parents need it the most.

We are on a mission to stronger, and healthier communities of color by offering encouraging and culturally competent care for all. We envision a society where all parents have the rights, respect, and resources to thrive

Access more resources on our website and follow us on Instagram to join our movement for better care for all.



www.queenandbaby.com →



@queenandbabybox