



# Examining Western Elimination Communication Practices and Outcomes: An Online Survey

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## Elimination Communication (EC)

An infant pottying approach based on practices in some Eastern countries, often *without* the use of diapers.

### Research Questions

What are the characteristics of parents who use Elimination Communication?

How do they practice EC?

What are the outcomes for pottying success and parental satisfaction with EC?

### Method

Online questionnaire via SurveyGizmo.com

### Recruitment:

Respondents were parents of a young child who has used, or is using, EC.

- Facebook Newsfeed ads
- ~116K 20- to 45-year-old women
- Recruited from Canada, USA, and UK
- EC-related key words (E.g., *attachment parenting, cloth diapers, and elimination communication*).

Have you used Elimination Communication pottying methods? Take our survey.



Share your EC experience!  
Help us learn more about EC and child development by sharing your experiences.

2.7% clicked through to the study consent form

419 consented

189 (45%) reached the last page of the survey

6 excluded as EC was started after 12 months

## Who is Practicing EC?

### EC Parent Demographics:

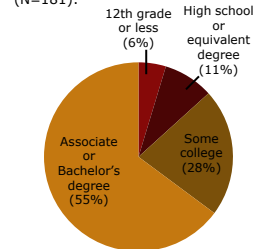
62% of respondents were from North America (N=183):

Canada	56
United States	62
U.K.	36
Other	29

90% of EC parents self-report middle to high SES status (N=180):

Low SES	10
Middle SES	89
High SES	81

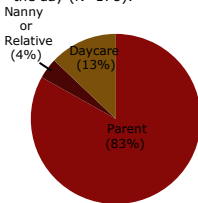
83% of EC parents had some post secondary education (N=181):



### EC Infant Characteristics:

(54% male, 46% female; N=183)

83% of EC infants were cared for by a parent during the day (N=178):



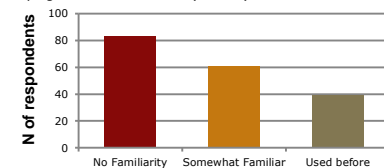
50% of EC infants have no sibling in the home (N=178):

Only child in home	90
1 sibling	54
2+ siblings	34

99% of EC infants were breastfed (N=180)

### Prior Experience with EC:

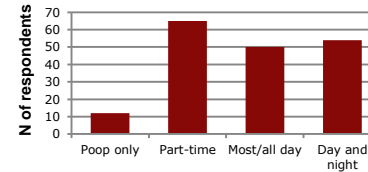
78% of parents had no or little familiarity with EC before trying it with their infants (N=183):



## How Do Parents Practice EC?

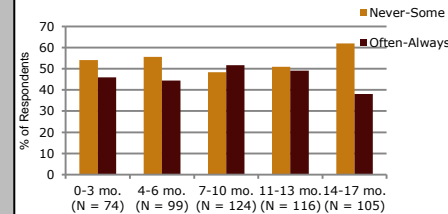
### Commitment to EC Usage (N=181):

56% used EC full-time.  
35% used EC part-time.  
9% used EC only, or primarily, to catch poop.



### Diaper Usage:

At all ages, half or fewer of EC parents used diapers often or always.



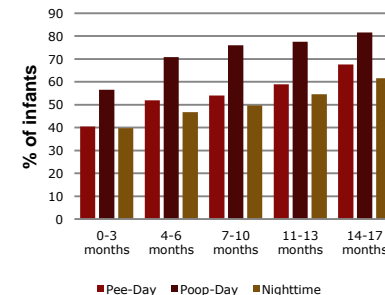
## Do EC Infants Succeed?

### EC Users Report Pottying Success: defined as >90% receptacle use

Most infants had pottying success with **poop** at all ages.

Success with **pee** and **nighttime** pottying were also high.

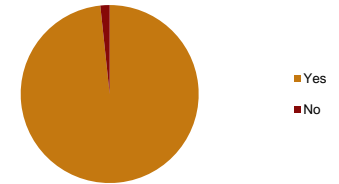
Gradual increase over time.



## Are EC Parents Satisfied?

### Would EC Parents Recommend It?

98% of EC users would recommend it to someone else!



### Sample Comments about EC:

- "I would recommend EC to any parent who desires to foster a sense of body awareness with their child."
- "EC is another way to communicate with your child and has many benefits."
- "I think it is good for both baby and environment and is a lot easier than most parents expect it to be."
- "It made potty learning hassle free - no treats or tears."
- "It's way less gross than wiping poop off of a baby's entire backside!"

## Discussion

EC users are found across the SES spectrum, but skewed toward the higher end.

Highly motivated parenting  
Very high breastfeeding rates and lengths  
High rates of staying at home

EC is a choice, not a cultural norm  
Majority did not have previous experience  
Often self-taught from online sources

Broad spectrum of EC usage  
Age of starting EC varies  
Close to half use diapers often or always  
Part-time use of EC is common

EC works  
Contradicts mainstream ideas about infant elimination

## Acknowledgements

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