

TEACHING TIP: THE INDUCTION BUTTERFLY

Submitted by Teri Shilling

Looking for a “warm and fuzzy” story to open your class session? Below is a short analogy that can be used to explain our first care practice that promotes normal birth: Labor Begins on Its Own.

Caterpillars spend most of their days crawling around eating leaves. Somehow, and we don't know why, they know when it's time to build their cocoon, and they know when it's time to come out. As a child, we might have come upon a cocoon with a butterfly almost ready to come out. We might have heard a loud noise from the beating of wings against the side of the cocoon, and as children we didn't know any better, so we might have been tempted to “help out” the butterfly. But we all know now that butterflies who are “helped out” early have a much tougher time. They beat their wings against the side of the cocoon to remove moisture from their wings. It's part of an important process for the butterfly. Humans are similar to butterflies in this way. Unless there is a medical reason, it's best to wait until the baby is ready to be born. It's tempting to “help out” butterflies and our birth statistics show it's tempting to “help out” babies early, but babies and butterflies do best when they do it without intervention/induction.