

Ten Steps to Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care

The following Ten Steps describe ways that child care centers can provide optimal support for breastfeeding families. Below each step are specific actions to support that step.

Step 1. Have a written policy that reflects the program's commitment to promoting and supporting breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding, and share with employees and families.

- 1.1 Our center has a written policy for promoting and supporting breastfeeding, and it is regularly communicated to our staff and families.
- 1.2 Staff evaluations document a review of breastfeeding support activities.
- 1.3 Our center's breastfeeding support is part of our discussion with all potential families.

Step 2. Train and evaluate all staff in the skills to support and promote optimal infant and young child feeding.

- 2.1 All staff at our center receive training on age-appropriate infant feeding practices, including proper storage and handling of human milk.
- 2.2 All staff at our center receive training on recognizing infant hunger cues and feeding in response to these cues.
- 2.3 All staff at our center receive training on the risks and benefits of different infant feeding options.
- 2.4 All staff at our center receive training in breastfeeding protection, promotion, and support, including support of exclusive breastfeeding.

Step 3. Inform women and families about the importance of breastfeeding.

- 3.1 We provide all our families with our written policy for promoting and supporting breastfeeding.
- 3.2 Culturally appropriate educational materials on breastfeeding and on the risks and benefits of different feeding options are displayed in several areas.
- 3.3 Culturally appropriate educational materials on breastfeeding and on the risks and benefits of different infant feeding options are actively distributed to the families we serve.

Step 4. Provide learning and play opportunities that normalize breastfeeding for children.

- 4.1 We provide toys and books that illustrate nursing animals and babies, for children of all ages.
- 4.2 We discuss interactions between mothers and babies with children of all ages, including how they feed.

Step 5. Ensure that all breastfeeding families we serve are able to properly store and label their breast milk for child care use.

- 5.1 We provide sufficient refrigerator and freezer space to accommodate all of our breastfeeding families' storage needs.
- 5.2 We instruct all breastfeeding families on the proper way to store and label human milk for child care center use, and all milk at our center is properly labeled.
- 5.3 We discuss with all families how expressed milk will be handled at our child care center.

Step 6. Provide a breastfeeding-friendly environment.

- 6.1 We actively invite breastfeeding mothers to come to the center to nurse their babies while under our care.
- 6.2 There is a clean and comfortable place in our center, other than a bathroom, for mothers to sit and nurse their babies, or pump (express) milk if desired.
- 6.3 Our center displays posters and distributes materials, including photos reflecting the families we serve, that show our support of breastfeeding and demonstrate best practices.

Step 7. Support breastfeeding employees.

- 7.1 Breastfeeding employees are given appropriate breaks so that they may express milk and/or nurse their babies as needed.
- 7.2 The center provides a clean, comfortable, private place for employees to pump/express milk and/or nurse their babies as needed.

Step 8. Ensure that each infant has a feeding plan that supports best feeding practices.

- 8.1 We develop a written feeding plan with each new family at our center, which is accessible and regularly updated.
- 8.2 Breastfeeding support is explicitly included in all feeding plans, as part of the standard form.
- 8.3 We respond to infants' hunger cues rather than feeding on a schedule, and we encourage mothers to feed this way at home.
- 8.4 We encourage mothers to introduce solid foods at a developmentally appropriate time.

Step 9. Contact and coordinate with community breastfeeding support resources; actively refer mothers and families.

- 9.1 Our center has a list of community breastfeeding resources to be used for referral.
- 9.2 Our center regularly refers families to community breastfeeding resources.
- 9.3 Our center tracks community referrals and follows up with families as needed.

Step 10. Train all staff (teaching and non-teaching) annually on the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.

- 10.1 Our center has up-to-date materials on hand that include information on breastfeeding and human milk feeding.
- 10.2 Each staff member receives at least one hour per year of continuing education on human milk feeding and breastfeeding support.
- 10.3 Our center provides a resource list, for our staff, of local lactation consultants and community providers who can answer breastfeeding and human milk feeding questions.