

Sample Child Care Center Breastfeeding Policy

A. Title: Breastfeeding Support Policy.

B. Belief Statement: Because breastfeeding provides the healthiest start for babies, providing ideal nutrition and a multitude of health benefits for both infant and mother, it is important for child care providers to support and encourage breastfeeding.

C. Intent Statement: The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all breastfeeding families have the support they need to continue breastfeeding while their children attend our child care center. We also strive to make sure that all families are well-informed about the risks and benefits of infant feeding choices as they may apply to these children and to any future children.

D. Background: Improving rates of breastfeeding is one of the most important ways we can improve the health of women and children. Breastfeeding decreases the risk of maternal diabetes and cancers, as well as a myriad of preventable pediatric conditions, including obesity, Type II diabetes, pneumonia, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (Ref. 1). Lower socio-economic groups, younger mothers, and African-Americans have the lowest breastfeeding rates, and this contributes to their higher rates for many of these diseases (Ref. 2).

There are many barriers to increasing breastfeeding duration. For many mothers, the need to return to work and be separated from their babies can make it challenging to continue breastfeeding. Research suggests that infants who are routinely cared for by someone other than their mothers are significantly less likely to be breastfed (Ref. 3). When child care centers provide support and encouragement for breastfeeding families, it can make it easier for mothers to continue to breastfeed, thus continuing to provide the optimal food and nurturing for babies.

E. Procedure/Practices:

- **We demonstrate our commitment to breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding.** We discuss breastfeeding with potential families, share breastfeeding materials with our families, and include breastfeeding support activities in staff evaluations.

- **We train our staff to support and promote optimal infant and young child feeding.** All new staff receive training in storage and handling of human milk, developmentally appropriate infant feeding practices, breastfeeding promotion, support of exclusive breastfeeding, and the risks/benefits of different infant feeding choices.
- **We inform women and families about the importance of breastfeeding.** We provide families with culturally appropriate information about the risks/benefits of different feeding choices. We also discuss the importance of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding with all families. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months means that infants are fed only human milk – no infant formula, water, juice or solid food for the first six months.
- **We provide learning and play opportunities which normalize breastfeeding for children.** Our center provides toys and books that illustrate nursing animals and babies, for children of all ages. We discuss interactions between mothers and babies, including how they feed.
- **We ensure that all breastfeeding families are able to properly store and label milk for child care center use.** We have written guidelines that we share with our families, and all milk at our center is properly labeled.
- **We provide a breastfeeding-friendly environment.** We invite mothers to come to the center and nurse their babies, and there is a comfortable place for them to do so. We display culturally appropriate posters of mothers nursing their babies.
- **We support breastfeeding employees.** Employees have access to a clean, private location to nurse their babies or express milk and are able to break as needed to do so.
- **We develop a feeding plan that supports best feeding practices with each family.** Understanding that feeding patterns at the child care center can impact the overall breastfeeding relationship, we work with each family to encourage practices that will help maintain breastfeeding. This includes nursing on demand when with their babies, responding to feeding cues rather than feeding on a schedule, and the developmentally-appropriate introduction of complementary foods.
- **We contact and coordinate with local breastfeeding support, and actively refer.** We maintain a list of community breastfeeding resources and regularly use this list for referrals. We track community referrals and follow-up with families as needed.
- **We continue updating and learning about ways to support parents in the protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.** We have up-to-date materials on hand that include information on breastfeeding and human milk feeding. We provide a resource list for our staff including local lactation consultants and community providers who can answer questions. Each staff member receives at least one hour per year of continuing education on human milk feeding and breastfeeding support.

F. Application: This policy applies to all staff of this child care center.

G. Communication: The center director will directly communicate this policy to all new and current staff members. All new parents will learn about this breastfeeding policy in their initial interview with the center director. As described above, written materials (brochures, etc.) will be shared with all families, and the center will display posters demonstrating breastfeeding support.

H. References:

1.a. Ip S, Chung M, Raman G, Chew P, Magula N, Devine D, Trikalinos T, Lau J. Breastfeeding and Maternal and Child Health Outcomes in Developed Countries. Evidence Report/Technology Assessment No. 153. AHRQ Publication No. 07-E007, Rockville, MD: US Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. April 2007.

1.b. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health. Why breastfeeding is important. Available from: <http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/why-breastfeeding-is-important/index.html>

2.a. Centers for Disease Control. Progress in Increasing Breastfeeding and Reducing Racial/Ethnic Differences – United States, 2000–2008 Births, MMWR, Feb 2013. Available from <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/resources/breastfeeding-trends.htm>

2.b. US Department of Health and Human Services, Healthy People 2020. Available from: <http://healthypeople.gov/2020/topicsobjectives2020/TechSpecs.aspx?hp2020id=MICH-21.2>

3.a. Pettigrew MM, Khodae M, Gillespie B, Schwartz K, Bobo JK, Foxman B. Duration of breastfeeding, daycare, and physician visits among infants 6 months and younger. Ann Epidemiol. 2003 Jul;13(6):431-5.

3.b Li R, Darling N, Maurice E, Barker L, Grummer-Strawn LM. Breastfeeding rates in the United States by characteristics of the child, mother, or family: the 2002 National Immunization Survey. Pediatrics. 2005 Jan;115(1):e31-7.

I. Effective date:

J. Review date:

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. Make a commitment to the importance of breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding, and share this commitment with fellow staff.

- 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 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 feeding options, are actively distributed to the families we serve.

Step 4. Provide learning and play opportunities which 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 milk for child care center 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 with information about breastfeeding, with photos appropriate for the families we serve.

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 parents to feed this way at home.
- 8.4 We encourage parents to introduce solid foods at a developmentally appropriate time.

Step 9. Contact and coordinate with local skilled breastfeeding support and actively refer.

- 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. Continue updates and learning about 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 that can answer breastfeeding and human milk feeding questions.



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NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center
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