
FROM DAY ONE

ACTIONS TO IMPROVE BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT IN PUBLIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

THE NEED FOR SUPPORT IN PUBLIC AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Every day, a mother's interest and efforts to breastfeed are influenced by public perception, culture, social norms, policies, and physical environments.

YOU CAN HELP

Thank you for considering how you can protect, promote, or support breastfeeding in Texas. We've created this list of ideas for you to consider as you identify your personal objectives and goals for making a difference.

Give Mothers the Support They Need

Breastfeeding support is a community responsibility. It takes commitment from each of us to develop a breastfeeding-friendly culture.

The actions suggested below are ideal for women, family members, friends, and clinicians.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Help pregnant women learn about the importance of breastfeeding for their babies and themselves.
- Encourage mothers to talk to their maternity care providers about plans to breastfeed.
- Encourage mothers to ask for help with breastfeeding when needed.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Learn about breastfeeding and how to protect, promote, and support it.
- Educate others about the importance of breastfeeding.
- Teach mothers how to breastfeed.
- Help women feel comfortable about breastfeeding their babies by conveying a warm, positive attitude and acknowledging/thanking them for breastfeeding.
- Become aware of the breastfeeding resources in your community and refer families to them if needed.
- Choose to conduct business with establishments that are supportive of breastfeeding, and thank them for their support.
- Inform establishments about the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code) if they are in violation.

- Volunteer at breastfeeding coalitions, task forces, multidisciplinary workgroups, committees, consortiums, focus groups, or advisory boards to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

Support Breastfeeding in Public Spaces

Breastfeeding families are more likely to visit businesses where they feel welcome and their family values are respected. Actively supporting breastfeeding in public establishments creates a family-friendly environment, attracts breastfeeding customers, and creates a breastfeeding-friendly community by showing that breastfeeding is visible, accepted, and valued.

The actions suggested below are ideal for recreation, leisure, retail, and service establishments as well as other public spaces.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Actively support a mother's decision to breastfeed.
- Develop, implement, and communicate a policy to promote and support breastfeeding.
- Consider establishing a clean, quiet space with comfortable seating for mothers who wish to breastfeed in a more private location.
- Actively educate staff about the policy and post the policy where it can be routinely reviewed.
- Train staff in properly responding in the event that a customer has a negative reaction to another customer breastfeeding her child.
- Adhere to the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code) and do not promote or receive funding, educational (or other) materials, or sponsorships from the infant-formula or other industries that are within the scope of the WHO Code.
- Do not sell or distribute patron information to vendors who may violate the WHO Code.
- Participate in and actively develop professional and volunteer collaborative opportunities, including breastfeeding coalitions, task forces, multidisciplinary workgroups, committees, consortium, or advisory boards to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Become familiar with Texas law that protects a woman's right to breastfeed her baby any place she is allowed to be.
- Display signs or decals, such as the DSHS Breastfeeding-Friendly Establishment decal, at the entrance of the facility to show that breastfeeding is welcome.

Develop Programs to Educate Fathers and Grandmothers

When a mother is thinking about how to feed her baby, she values the advice of her partner the most, followed by the advice of her mother, family, and friends. To make breastfeeding successful, mothers need the support and encouragement of all these people.

The actions suggested below are ideal for public health entities, community organizations, and hospitals.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Launch or establish campaigns for breastfeeding education that target a mother's primary support network, including fathers and grandmothers.
- Offer classes on breastfeeding that are convenient for family members to attend.

Strengthen Support Programs

Adequate support, especially in the early days of breastfeeding, is important for helping women meet their breastfeeding goals and significantly increases duration and exclusivity of breastfeeding. Peer support programs are economical and have been found to be effective.

The actions suggested below are ideal for public health entities, community organizations, and federal, state, and local WIC programs.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Create and maintain a sustainable infrastructure for mother-to-mother support groups and for peer counseling programs in hospitals and community health-care settings.
- Establish peer counseling as a core service available to all women in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).
- Work with local WIC agency to promote the WIC Peer Counselor Program.
- Support the development of mother-to-mother support groups such as La Leche League International.
- Work to establish a community-based breastfeeding support and information center such as a Baby Café.
- Work to promote community availability and reimbursement of skilled lactation support and International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs).
- Work to finance and develop a sustainable walk-in clinic where professional lactation support is available to all new mothers in the community on a sliding-scale basis.
- Develop a community breastfeeding resources directory and distribute to new families.
- Ensure referrals to appropriate levels of support and care by informing health-care professionals in the community about available resources.
- Adhere to the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code) and do not promote or receive funding, educational (or other) materials, or sponsorships from the infant-formula or other industries that are within the scope of the WHO Code.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Complete the DSHS Peer Counselor Train-the-Trainers course and work to develop a network of community peer counselors.

- Publicize and use the Texas Lactation Support Directory and the Texas Lactation Support Hotlines: (800) 514-6667, (855) 550-6667, and (877) 550-5008.

Use Community-Based Organizations to Promote/Support Breastfeeding

Organizations based in communities are aware of the specific barriers that women in their communities face and can identify workable solutions for these women. Communities should protect, promote, and support breastfeeding initiation, continuation, and exclusivity.

The actions suggested below are ideal for federal, state, and local governments, foundations, public health entities, and community organizations.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Support and fund small nonprofit organizations that promote breastfeeding in communities of color.
- Integrate education and support for breastfeeding into public health programs that serve new families.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Work to establish a community-based breastfeeding support and information center such as a Baby Café.
- Work to promote community availability and reimbursement of skilled lactation support and International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs).
- Work to finance and develop a sustainable walk-in clinic where professional lactation support is available to all new mothers in the community on a sliding-scale basis.
- Develop a community breastfeeding resources directory and distribute to new families.
- Ensure referrals to appropriate levels of support and care by informing health professionals in the community about available resources.
- Ensure around-the-clock access to resources that provide assistance with breastfeeding.
- Adhere to the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code) and do not promote or receive funding, educational (or other) materials, or sponsorships from the infant-formula or other industries that are within the scope of the WHO Code.
- Publicize and use the Texas Lactation Support Directory and the Texas Lactation Support Hotlines: (800) 514-6667, (855) 550-6667, and (877) 550-5008.

Arm Students with Knowledge and Support

Schools play a crucial role in developing knowledge and critical thinking skills and in shaping attitudes, beliefs, and social norms of society. Lactation support in the school setting has also been shown to increase breastfeeding success among teens.

The actions suggested below are ideal for school administrators, teachers, and PTAs.

Actions to Consider:

- Support teachers and other school employees and become designated as a Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite by establishing a written worksite lactation support policy.
- Incorporate age-appropriate information into science, health, social studies, and other subjects in school to help students develop positive attitudes and accurate information about breastfeeding and lactation.
- Support parenting students in initiation, continuation, and exclusivity of breastfeeding by developing, implementing, and communicating a policy that provides for adequate time, a private, clean location other than a restroom, and milk storage options.
- Adhere to the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code) and do not promote or receive funding, educational (or other) materials, or sponsorships from the infant-formula or other industries that are within the scope of the WHO Code.
- Participate in and actively develop professional and volunteer collaborative opportunities, including breastfeeding coalitions, task forces, multidisciplinary workgroups, committees, consortiums, or advisory boards to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

Support or Develop a Coalition

By bringing together local individuals and organizations with a variety of interests and expertise, coalitions are an effective way to influence social change. They can maximize community resources, avoid duplication of efforts, and unite a community in providing optimal care for women and children.

The actions suggested below are ideal for breastfeeding coalitions and anyone with an interest in supporting breastfeeding.

Actions to Consider:

- Support your community's existing local breastfeeding coalition or work to develop breastfeeding coalitions where they do not exist.
- Communicate and collaborate with other breastfeeding coalitions across the state to increase the impact of efforts and to share lessons learned.
- Support and participate in the Texas Breastfeeding Coalition (TXBC) and in the United States Breastfeeding Committee's state coalition network (for TXBC members only).
- Encourage community members and leaders from a variety of backgrounds to participate in state and local breastfeeding coalitions.
- Assess your community's resources and needs at all levels (health care, employers, child care, education, government, and general community) for breastfeeding protection, promotion, and support.
- Develop, implement, evaluate, and publicize strategies to address community needs (e.g., through interventions; projects; development and distribution of educational materials; and policy changes).

- Engage the media to increase visibility and awareness of breastfeeding as a community issue.
- Ensure that the coalition and all members adhere to the International Code of Marketing Breast-milk Substitutes (WHO Code) and do not promote or receive funding, educational (or other) materials, or sponsorships from the infant-formula or other industries that are within the scope of the WHO Code.

Create a Campaign to Promote Breastfeeding

Social marketing, unlike traditional marketing, engages members of the community with each other (e.g., through forums or blogs). It's a promising way to ensure that new generations understand the value of breastfeeding and can make well-informed decisions about infant feeding.

The actions suggested below are ideal for federal, state, and local partners; public health entities; community organizations.

Action Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Develop and implement a national public health campaign on breastfeeding that relies heavily on social marketing.

Additional Action to Consider:

- Use a variety of media venues to reach young women and their families.

Improve National Leadership on the Promotion/Support of Breastfeeding

Low rates of breastfeeding are a public health problem of national significance. Although many organizations and public health agencies have contributed to improvements in breastfeeding over time, coordinated leadership of these efforts is still lacking.

The actions suggested below are ideal for government and public health entities.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Create a federal interagency workgroup on breastfeeding.
- Increase the capacity of the United States Breastfeeding Committee and affiliated state coalitions to support breastfeeding.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Create state and/or local interagency workgroup on breastfeeding.
- Increase the capacity of the Texas Breastfeeding Coalition and affiliated local coalitions to support breastfeeding.

Do you have an action you'd like to recommend that is not listed here? Tell us about your action at WICGeneral@dshs.state.tx.us.

For more ideas about how you can help support breastfeeding, visit From Day One: A Community for Breastfeeding Support at SupportFromDayOne.org.