
FROM DAY ONE

ACTIONS TO IMPROVE BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT AT WORK

THE NEED FOR SUPPORT AT WORK

To continue breastfeeding while fulfilling work responsibilities, working mothers need the support of their employers. Many women are uncomfortable talking to their employers, and many employers don't realize there's a need. Child-care providers may have practices or environments that fail to support or that may even interfere with breastfeeding.

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.

Establish and Maintain Worksite Lactation Support Programs

Currently, only a quarter of U.S. employers provide mothers with an area to express breastmilk at the workplace. Continuation of breastfeeding after returning to work increases when the employer offers a high-quality lactation support program.

The actions suggested below are ideal for government entities, public health entities, employer organizations, and employers.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Develop resources to help employers comply with federal law that requires employees to provide the time and a place for nursing mothers to express breastmilk.
- Design and disseminate materials to educate employers about the benefits of providing more comprehensive, high-quality support for breastfeeding employees.
- Develop and share innovative solutions to the obstacles to breastfeeding that women face when returning to work in non-office settings.
- Promote comprehensive, high-quality lactation support programs as part of a basic employee benefits package.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Adopt policies, including maternity leave and worksite lactation support policies, that enable successful establishment of lactation, six months of exclusive breastfeeding, and continued breastfeeding for as long as the mother desires.
- Protect women from hazards in the work setting.
- Ensure job protection and non-discrimination for 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.
- Participate in professional and volunteer collaborative opportunities, including participation in breastfeeding coalitions, task forces, multidisciplinary workgroups, committees, consortiums, or advisory boards to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in the workplace and within the larger community.
- Become designated as, or help other employers to become designated as, a Texas Mother-Friendly Worksite by establishing a written breastfeeding policy to help mothers combine work and breastfeeding.

Increase a Working Mother’s Direct Access to Her Children

Although working mothers can express and store breastmilk to feed their infants, this is only one approach to breastfeeding support. Directly breastfeeding the infant during the workday is the most effective strategy of combining employment and breastfeeding, as it increases the duration and intensity of breastfeeding.

The actions suggested below are ideal for government entities, community organizations, public health entities, employers, and chambers of commerce.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Create incentive or recognition programs for businesses that establish, subsidize, and support child-care centers at or near the business site.
- Identify and promote innovative programs that allow mothers to directly breastfeed their babies after they return to work.

Additional Action to Consider:

- Create an environment that supports visitors to your worksite in breastfeeding by developing, implementing, and communicating a policy that promotes a woman’s right to breastfeed her baby anywhere she is allowed to be.

Ensure That Child-Care Providers Accommodate Needs of Breastfeeding Mothers

Because most employed mothers return to work in their babies’ first year of life, providers of child care have a critical role to play in supporting employed mothers who breastfeed.

The actions suggested below are ideal for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Health Resources and Services Administration, state governments, and child-care providers.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Promote adoption of the breastfeeding standards in Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care.

Additional Actions to Consider:

- Develop, implement, and communicate a breastfeeding policy that is supportive of continued breastfeeding for children in child-care facilities.
- Train child-care staff in the care of the breastfed infant, in proper handling and storage of breastmilk, and in methods to promote and support breastfeeding.
- Create a breastfeeding-friendly environment by promoting breastfeeding over formula-feeding in all communications, in the physical child-care setting, and in activities with the children (e.g., toys, education materials, posters, displays).
- Maintain a list of breastfeeding community resources and referrals that are available to families, including the Texas Lactation Support Hotlines: (800) 514-6667, (855) 550-6667, and (877) 550-5008.
- 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 professional and volunteer collaborative opportunities, including participation in breastfeeding coalitions, task forces, multidisciplinary workgroups, committees, consortiums, or advisory boards to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding.

Provide Paid Maternity Leave for Employed Mothers

Most women of childbearing age in the United States work. Numerous studies have shown that providing paid maternity leave for employed mothers increases the success of breastfeeding as well as improves other aspects of maternal and child health.

The actions suggested below are ideal for governments and employers.

Actions Recommended by the U.S. Surgeon General:

- Add maternity leave to the categories of paid leave for federal civil servants.
- Develop and implement programs in states to establish a funding mechanism for paid maternity leave.

Additional Action to Consider:

- Implement maternity leave programs for your workplace.

Do you have an action you'd like to recommend that is not listed here? Tell us about your recommended 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.