

# TOOLKIT



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This toolkit is based on the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. Tool Kit: Breastfeeding Welcome Here for Child Care. Anchorage, Alaska: Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Public Health. 2019.

# Become a Recognized Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Site

This toolkit explains how to become a recognized Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care site or family child care home. Being a recognized Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care site shows parents and your community that your program follows national breastfeeding and infant feeding standards. It lets everyone know that you are committed to helping families give their children the best nutritional start they can – with breast milk!

Child care sites and family child care homes that complete the Breastfeeding Friendly steps will:

- Receive a Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care window decal and certificate to display. This lets parents know that your program supports breastfeeding.
- Be listed on the Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates (COBA) Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care webpage as well as on the Oklahoma State Health Department Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite webpage. These webpages are promoted to parents as a source of information to find breastfeeding-friendly child care programs.





## Why is breastfeeding important?

**Breastmilk feeding is good for babies.** Human milk is the perfect food for human babies. Breastfeeding health benefits for babies include reducing illnesses such as respiratory infection, allergies, asthma, and ear infections, and helping them grow at a healthy weight. It also helps decrease the incidence of later childhood cancers, SIDS, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

**Breastfeeding is good for moms.** Breastfeeding helps speed recovery from childbirth, lowers the risk for certain diseases such as breast cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, and strengthens the bond with her baby.

**Breastfeeding is good for child care providers.** Encouraging and supporting breastfeeding families can lead to healthier children, better daily attendance, higher parent satisfaction, and more public recognition.

Many moms initiate breastfeeding but find it difficult to continue when they return to work or school. Child care programs that support breastfeeding families allow parents to continue to breastfeed and feed their babies breast milk for as long as they desire.

**Exclusive Breastfeeding.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that babies are exclusively breastfed (fed only breast milk) for approximately the first six months of life with continued breastfeeding while solid foods are slowly introduced as long as is mutually desired by mom and baby for two years or beyond. ([AAP, 2022](#))

## Steps to Becoming a Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Site

Complete, sign and submit the Breastfeeding-Friendly Commitment Form for Child Care.

- The online form is available on the COBA website
- The owner or director of the child care center or family child care home must sign the form
- All commitment statements must be answered “yes”
- Please answer all commitment statements honestly
- Include a photograph of your breastfeeding space
- Include a copy of your breastfeeding policies

### **Need help meeting the six Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care site commitments**

If you cannot honestly answer “yes” to one or more of the commitment statements, we can help! One-on-one coaching and resources are available to help you reach your goals. Learn more by emailing [info@okbreastfeeding.org](mailto:info@okbreastfeeding.org) or calling 405/297-5683 ext. 105.

## **Six Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Site Commitment Statements**

**PROVIDE A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT FOR  
BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS**

**PROVIDE BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT**

**PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
FOR STAFF**

**HAVE WRITTEN POLICIES THAT REFLECT  
YOUR COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE AND  
SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING**

**FOLLOW NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR  
INFANT FEEDING**

**SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING EMPLOYEES**

## Provide a welcoming environment for breastfeeding mothers

At a minimum, this includes:

- Allowing mothers to breastfeed at your site
- Providing a quiet and comfortable space set aside for mothers to breastfeed or express milk (other than a bathroom)
- Providing refrigerator and/or freezer space for all families to store expressed milk.

**Create a quiet, comfortable space for mothers to breastfeed their babies to express milk.** Provide a space with some privacy. This could be a separate small room or corner of a room separated with a curtain or a divider wall. A bathroom is not a good place for breastfeeding or pumping. The space should have an electric outlet, comfortable seating, and a sink with running water in the room or nearby.

**Provide families with refrigerator and freezer space at your site.** Human milk brought from home or expressed on-site must be clearly labeled with the child's name and the date it was expressed. Expressed breast milk is not a biohazard and does not have to be in a separate food refrigerator.

Other ways to provide a welcoming environment include displaying posters, brochures, and other materials that promote breastfeeding. Include children's books about how mammals feed their young in your library.

The [Oklahoma Women, Infants and Children Program \(WIC\)](#) has handouts available to print and the [US Department of Agriculture, WIC Breastfeeding Support](#) website has numerous posters to download and print for free.

## Provide breastfeeding support

- Share with families the ways you support breastfeeding
- Share with families education materials about breastfeeding
- Teach families to properly store and label their expressed milk
- Link families with community organizations that provide breastfeeding support

Child care providers have a great opportunity to promote the importance of human milk feeding and to share information to help these families.

Let families know all the ways your site supports breastfeeding. Provide families with your breastfeeding policies at orientation and post them on your website. Provide information on breastfeeding in your newsletter or on your social media site.

Provide families with culturally appropriate breastfeeding materials or evidence-based online resources.

Some good, free materials and websites include:

- Office on Women's Health: [www.womenshealth.gov/your-guide-to-breastfeeding](http://www.womenshealth.gov/your-guide-to-breastfeeding)
- American Academy of Pediatrics: [www.Healthychildren.org](http://www.Healthychildren.org)
- US Department of Agriculture, WIC Breastfeeding Support: [www.wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov](http://www.wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov)
- La Leche League: [www.llli.org](http://www.llli.org)
- Oklahoma WIC: <https://oklahoma.gov/health/wichandouts.html>

Parents often need help to continue with breastfeeding or expressing milk. An experienced, trained breastfeeding counselor, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC), or local support groups can offer valuable help. The [Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates \(COBA\)](#) can connect you with resources in your area including the most recent Oklahoma Lactation Consultant Resource Guide.

Teacher and staff attitudes can also support breastfeeding families. Be sure that all teachers and staff show positive attitudes about breastfeeding and are prepared to answer parents' questions about breastfeeding.

## Provide professional development for all staff

(or owner of the family child care home completes professional development) at least 2 times each year to promote and support breastfeeding mothers.

At a minimum, this includes:

- Training about proper storage and handling of expressed human milk
- Training about infant feeding and how to bottle-feed a breastfed baby
- Training on your program's policies for promoting and supporting breastfeeding (not required for family child care homes)

Owners, directors, teachers, and staff play an important role in providing a breastfeeding friendly child care site. Training helps keep your breastfeeding friendly policies successful.

With training, staff should be able to:

- Safely label, store, thaw, and warm expressed human milk
- Recognize and respond appropriately to baby's hunger cues
- Feed expressed human milk to infants at appropriate times
- Understand your site's written policies for promoting and supporting breastfeeding
- Share with families the benefits of breastfeeding, the breastfeeding education materials your site provides, and how to find local resources to assist breastfeeding parents

Resources for training on storing and handling expressed human milk:

- Caring for our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards 4.3.1.3 ([www.nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/4.3.1.3](http://www.nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/4.3.1.3)) and 4.3.1.4 ([www.nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/4.3.1.4](http://www.nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/4.3.1.4))
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm)

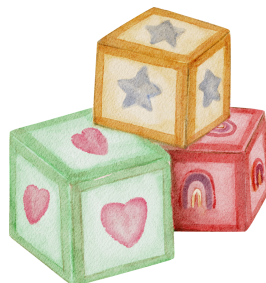
Resources for other breastfeeding and infant feeding topics:

- Child and Adult Care Food Program "Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program" at [www.fns.usda.gov/tn/feeding-infants-child-and-adult-care-food-program](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/feeding-infants-child-and-adult-care-food-program)

## Have written policies that reflect your commitment to promote and support breastfeeding

Creating a breastfeeding friendly child care site begins with written breastfeeding policies. Written policies help teachers, staff, and parents know what to expect at your site. Policies should address all the Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care commitments and include at a minimum:

- A clear statement that your site welcomes and supports parents who breastfeed their babies
- A statement that your site provides a comfortable space for breastfeeding or expressing milk and refrigerator and/or freezer space to store expressed milk
- A commitment to provide families with education materials on human milk feeding
- A commitment to train all staff (or complete professional development for owner of the family child care home) on the skills needed to support breastfeeding
- A commitment to follow the national standards for breastfeeding and infant feeding from the [Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standards, Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 4th ed.](#)
- A clear statement that your site supports breastfeeding employees (not required for family child care homes, unless there is more than one employee)



## Follow national standards for infant feeding

At a minimum, this includes:

- Feeding infants on cue, not on a schedule
- Developing a breastfeeding friendly infant feeding plan with each family
- Ensuring breastfed babies do not receive food or drink, other than their mother's own milk, unless indicated in the feeding plan

Feeding on cue means responding to early signs of hunger that come before the baby starts crying. Signs that a baby is hungry include:

- Bringing fists to mouth
- Waking or tossing
- Making sucking noises
- Opening and closing their mouth
- Turning with an open mouth toward anything that touches their cheek or lips (rooting)

Signs that a baby is full include:

- Slowing or stopping sucking
- Pushing or arching away
- Turning or attempting to turn away from the nipple
- Falling asleep



## Follow [national standards](#) for infant feeding continued

Feed babies according to their hunger and fullness signals, not on a schedule. Allow the baby to start and stop the feeding. Forcing babies to feed when they are not hungry or to finish a bottle can lead to over-feeding and excess weight gain.

Feeding time should be positive and nurturing for the baby. Hold babies while feeding human milk from a bottle. Look baby in the eyes and talk pleasantly. Never prop up a bottle or leave a baby alone with a bottle while feeding.

Talk with each family about a detailed feeding plan for their baby. Breastfed babies are less likely to be given formula by mistake when you have a written plan. Written feeding plans should include at a minimum:

- Baby's food intolerances, allergies, and preferences
- Instructions for feeding a baby who is breastfed or fed expressed milk
- Permission to feed a baby when they show hunger cues and end feedings based on cues
- Instructions for introducing solid and new foods while in child care

Do not feed babies human milk in a bottle mixed with cereal, fruit juice, or other foods unless the primary care provider provides written instructions.



## **Support breastfeeding employees by providing flexible breaks and a quiet, comfortable space for breastfeeding and/or expressing breast milk**

Businesses that provide time and space for employees to breastfeed or express their milk have significant cost savings. The benefits include fewer days of sick leave, lower health care costs, better retention of employees, and higher company loyalty.

The space available to mothers to breastfeed their children at the child care center may also be used to support breastfeeding employees. Have a clear statement in your breastfeeding policies that your site supports breastfeeding employees.

This is not required for family child care homes unless there is more than one employee.



# Breastfeeding and the Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) provides healthy meals and snacks to children and adults receiving day care. It plays a vital role in improving the quality of child care and making healthy meals more affordable for low-income families.

Child care centers and family child care homes participating in CACFP receive money for serving healthy meals that follow the United States Department of Agriculture CACFP meal patterns.

CACFP programs can receive money for breastfed babies when:

A mother directly breastfeeds her baby at the child care center or family child care home

The family provides expressed human milk to the child care provider for their baby

A child care employee breastfeeds their baby on-site, as long as the baby is enrolled at the center

A family child care home provider breastfeeds their baby on-site, as long as the baby is enrolled in CACFP and the household is eligible for CACFP

CACFP programs can receive money for meals even when the baby is taking only human milk if individual documentation is done for that baby. While programs must maintain menus to show what foods a baby is served, child care providers do not need to record the amount of milk consumed when a mother directly breastfeeds her baby.

## Resource:

Memo CACFP 02-2018: Feeding Infants and Meal Pattern Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers. September 20, 2023 [www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/feeding-infants-and-meal-pattern-requirements-qas](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/feeding-infants-and-meal-pattern-requirements-qas)