COALITION OF OKLAHOMA BREASTFEEDING ADVOCATES

Breastfeeding Support in Childcare Position Statement

The Coalition of Oklahoma Breastfeeding Advocates (COBA) recognizes that childcare providers play a critical role in supporting breastfeeding families as they return to work, school, and other activities outside the home. Breastfeeding-friendly childcare environments help families meet their infant feeding goals while promoting optimal health, growth, and development for infants and young children.

COBA supports childcare environments that promote, protect, and support breastfeeding as a vital component of child health, development, and family well-being. Through evidence-based policies and practices, childcare providers can help ensure families receive consistent support throughout their breastfeeding journey.

POSITION

COBA supports childcare facilities that implement policies and practices to ensure breastfeeding families are supported through:

- Providing staff education regarding the benefits of breastfeeding, safe handling and storage of human milk, and implementation of individualized feeding plans.
- Welcoming and encouraging parents to breastfeed on-site at drop-off, pick-up, or at mutually agreed-upon times.
- Providing a clean, safe, and comfortable space for breastfeeding or milk expression, ensuring privacy when desired.
- Accepting, handling, and storing expressed human milk in accordance with evidence-based guidelines, including those from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Feeding infants using developmentally appropriate and responsive feeding practices, including paced bottle feeding when appropriate.
- Maintaining open communication with families regarding feeding preferences, infant feeding cues, and changes to feeding plans.
- Providing access to breastfeeding education, community resources, and referrals when additional support is needed.
- Supporting childcare employees in achieving their own breastfeeding goals by providing appropriate break time and space for milk expression in accordance with applicable laws.
- Utilizing COBA resources and breastfeeding-friendly childcare materials to strengthen support for breastfeeding families within the childcare setting and broader community.

By adopting these practices, childcare facilities help create a culture that supports breastfeeding families, improves child health outcomes, and strengthens the health of Oklahoma communities.

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