

LACTATION SUPPORT TOOLKIT

Employer's Simple Guide to Supporting Breastfeeding Employees

Portage County Breastfeeding Coalition

What Can This Toolkit Offer?

- An integrated approach to implementing a cost-effective lactation support program
- Ready to implement
 - Straightforward options
 - Proven strategies
 - Reproducible tools that can easily meet any company's needs



[See Resource # 1 for Employer Success Stories](#)

Return on Investment (ROI)

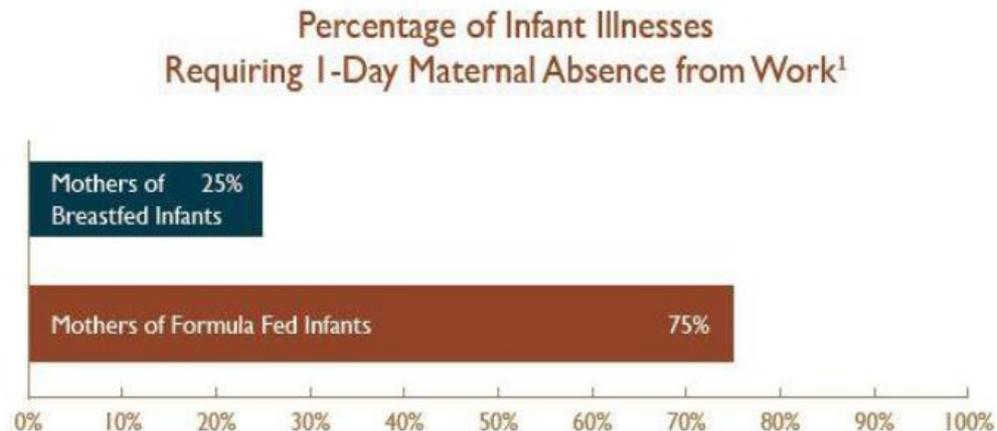
- ROI is the bottom line in assessing the value of new lactation support programs
 - Aetna found a \$2.80 return for every \$1 invested to support lactation
 - Sanvita, a worksite lactation support company, has found that companies have obtained \$1.50 to \$4.50 for each dollar invested
- Breastfeeding employees aren't the only ones who benefit...

Why support nursing moms in your workplace?

- **Fewer sick days for moms**

- Formula feeding moms have 3 times as many one-day absences from work to care for sick children in the first year of life than breastfeeding moms. Cohen, Mrtek, and Mrtek (1995)

- For every 1000 formula feeding babies, their mothers would miss an estimated combined total of one full year of work more than breastfeeding mothers, because their children are sick more often
Ball and Wright (1999)



Why support nursing moms in your workplace?

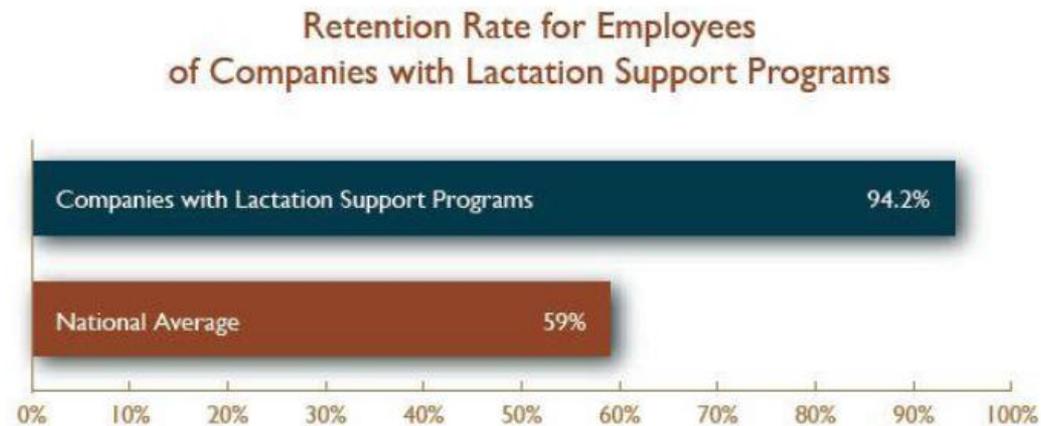
- **Lower health care costs**
 - Infants who receive only their mothers' milk for the first three months incur \$331 less in health care costs over the first year of life.



Why support nursing moms in your workplace?

- **Lower staff turnover**

- Employers find that lactation support leads to improved staff productivity and loyalty, which helps retain talented employees.



- **Positive image of a family friendly employer.**

Why should you care about breastfeeding in the workplace?

- All major medical organizations recommend:
 - Babies receive human milk exclusively during the first 6 r
 - Continued breastfeeding to 1 year and beyond
- Breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to protect the health of an infant and mother.
- In Wisconsin, approximately **76% of new mothers** now follow their doctor's advice by breastfeeding immediately after birth
- Many women discontinue breastfeeding early because of concerns about breastfeeding at work, or they delay returning to work, or do not return at all, because they feel employment prevents them from breastfeeding



Why should you care about breastfeeding in the workplace?



Mothers do *not* have to choose between breastfeeding and returning to work, and employers can retain valuable employees. A supportive environment makes the difference!

Lactation Support Requires Few Resources

- Over 9 out of 10 Portage County employers surveyed thought that if they could provide support their breastfeeding employees would be able to combine work and breastfeeding successfully.
- Basic needs of breastfeeding employees are minimal...

A comprehensive program that includes the following four components has been shown in business environments to provide the greatest return on investment:

- 1. Privacy for milk expression**
- 2. Flexible breaks and work options**
- 3. Education**
- 4. Support**

Getting Started

- The program can be as simple or elaborate as you need
 - Company executives typically report developing a program is easier than they imagined
- There are a variety of models for breastfeeding support programs
 - Easily implemented in diverse workplace settings
 - This guide is designed to determine what will work best for YOUR COMPANY!



Simple Guidelines

- Start small with a simple pilot program
- Actively get input from employees
 - Determine their needs
 - Communicate the company's interest in supporting breastfeeding in the workplace
- Gain buy-in from company stakeholders
- Get help from available community resources

[See Resource #1 for Getting Started Guidelines](#)

Potential Stakeholders: Gain Input and Buy-In

- Determine diverse individuals who might be effective in implementing a new lactation program



[See Resource #1 to Learn How to Identify Your Potential Stakeholders](#)

Would you eat in the bathroom?



Program Options:

PRIVACY DURING MILK EXPRESSION

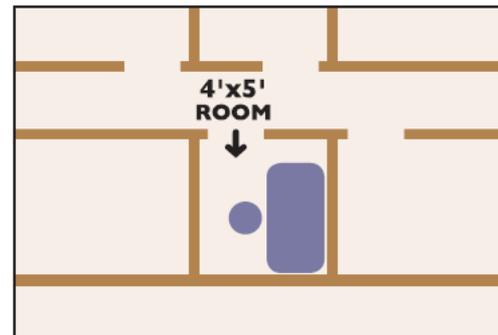
Breastfeeding employees should never be expected to express milk in a restroom!

- Restrooms are unsanitary, usually lack appropriate electrical connections, and do not provide a place to comfortably operate a breast pump.
- By law, an employer must provide a space, other than a bathroom, for a breastfeeding employee to express milk.

[Click Here to Read the
“Reasonable Break Time for Nursing Mothers” Law](#)

PRIVACY DURING MILK EXPRESSION

- The cost is usually a one-time expenditure (besides standard maintenance)
 - Multiple breastfeeding women can make use of the facility over a long period of time= continuous ROI
- Simple lactation rooms can be created out of little used areas within existing building space
 - Small as 4' x 5'
 - As simple or elaborate as desired



- Involve facilities management staff and at least one breastfeeding employee experienced in milk expression as you examine options.

[See Resource # 1 to View Pictures of Example Lactation Rooms](#)

PRIVACY DURING MILK EXPRESSION

- Basic Amenities:
 - Chair
 - Something to put pump on
 - Electrical outlet
 - Anti-microbial wipes
- Added Amenities:
 - Breast pump
 - Small refrigerator
 - Artwork/bulletin board



[See Resource # 1 for Lactation Room Guidelines](#)

PRIVACY DURING MILK EXPRESSION: Possible Room Options

- **Possible Spaces Include:**
 - A seldom used existing office space or other room
 - A clean, infrequently used closet or small storage area
 - Sectioning off a small corner of a room with either permanent walls or portable partitions
 - A walled off corner of a lounge adjacent to the women's restroom
 - Adapting a "small unused space" that is not utilized well for other needs
 - If space is not available consider allowing employees to express milk in a conference room, a vacant office, a storeroom, a locked office, or a dressing room.

Program Options:

FLEXIBLE BREAKS AND WORK OPTIONS

- Ideally, mothers need at least 6-12 weeks of maternity leave to recover from childbirth and establish a good milk supply
- When a woman can't take this much time, employer support can help her transition back to work
- Women typically require 2-3 pumping sessions of around 15 minutes each, not counting time to go to and from the room
 - As the baby begins eating solid foods around 6 months, pumping sessions often become less frequent



FLEXIBLE BREAKS AND WORK OPTIONS

- Transition options include:
 - Part-time employment or telecommuting for a few weeks before resuming full-time work
 - Working longer hours 4 days of the week and taking off in the middle of the work week to allow a day to rebuild milk supply by being with the baby
 - Returning to work on a Thursday or Friday to allow for the quick weekend to rebuild milk supply before facing an entire week of separation from the baby
 - Job-sharing, which research shows can be highly effective for both employees and the employer
 - Any type of flexibility is better than none. Brainstorm with the employee and your team if the above options don't work for your company
- Organizations that offer a flexible structure report that their employees are so appreciative of the program that abuse of this system of support is rare.

Program Options: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Breastfeeding is a learned behavior
- Basic breastfeeding information beginning in pregnancy helps both male and female employees make an informed choice, and builds support among family members and colleagues.
- A variety of educational options can be provided
 - Prenatal education for employees
 - Access to a lactation consultant postpartum
 - Back to work education
 - Ongoing education

Program Options:

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Prenatal Education

- For both mothers and fathers

- During the lunch break at the worksite

- Educate families about infant feeding options and the breastfeeding support they can expect in their workplace.
- Companies with predominantly male employees can offer classes for both expectant fathers and their pregnant partners (Lower healthcare costs)

- Encourage or allow employees to take leave to attend classes available in the community.

- Classes are often available through local hospitals, private health clinics, WIC, or local breastfeeding groups.



[See Resource # 3 to View Educational Resource Ideas](#)

Program Options: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Prenatal Education Cont'd.
 - Provide pamphlets, books, and videos for pregnant employees
 - Include a breastfeeding page on your company web site with downloadable resources and Frequently Asked Questions about working and breastfeeding.

[See Resource # 3 to View an Employee Educational Brochure](#)

Program Options: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Postpartum Education
 - Research has shown that lactation support by a qualified expert helps women continue breastfeeding longer, which contributes to the company's ROI.
- Postpartum lactation support services often include one-on-one assistance



Program Options:

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Postpartum Education
 - Some insurance companies will pay for up to two visits with an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).
 - Company benefits coordinator or HR personnel can inform the mother to check with her insurance to see if lactation consults or breast pumps are included health benefits.
 - Some corporate lactation programs contract with an IBCLC or other health professional to provide lactation support.
 - Inform employees about local lactation resources when they return to work

Program Options:

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Back to Work Education
 - Contract with an Lactation Consultant or other health professional
 - Offer personalized back to work consults for returning mothers
 - Lactation Consultants help make the transition back to work, assist with using the breast pump, answer common questions
 - Tailored to that unique employee
 - Setting up a milk expression schedule at home and work to fit her unique job situation
 - Identifying places to express milk at work
 - Effective techniques for milk expression
 - Storing and handling human milk specific to the employee's situation
 - Maintaining and building milk supply;
 - Talking with supervisors about her needs
 - Adjusting to the physical and emotional needs returning to work.



Program Options: EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- Ongoing Education
 - Access to an IBCLC
 - Resource library
 - Mom-to-mom peer mentor groups in the workplace



Program Options: WORKPLACE SUPPORT



- Nearly all breastfeeding employees report that **what they value most about their company's lactation program is company support**
- Verbal and written support from supervisors, colleagues, and other breastfeeding employees is key to a successful program
- Although a written worksite policy can help ensure supportive practices, many companies do not have written policies but have excellent lactation support programs that are highly valued by employees.

[See Resource # 3 to Learn
How to Implement a Lactation Support Policy](#)

Program Options:

WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- Enhance support provided from supervisors and managers by:
 - Including basic information about the needs of breastfeeding employees into your manager and supervisor training programs
 - Establish program policies that recognize the needs of breastfeeding employees
 - Encourage supervisors to offer breastfeeding employees the flexibility to adjust meeting times around their scheduled pumping sessions, and to provide positive feedback on their choice to breastfeed
 - Disseminate information about the designated room, or any other aspects of the lactation support program including any prenatal classes, support groups, etc.

Program Options: WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- Research shows most coworkers, particularly employees who have children of their own, support company health benefit programs that include lactation support
- Occasionally, some co-workers might view these services as unfair
 - Perceive being required to cover the breastfeeding mother's tasks or shifts
- Successful lactation programs consider the needs of both the breastfeeding employee and her co-workers



Program Options: WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- Some strategies to gain buy-in include:
 - Involving co-worker representatives as part of the initial planning phase
 - Identify and address potential concerns
 - Promoting the program as a company health benefit
 - Communicating ways the company accommodates other employee needs
 - Ex: fitness program breaks, etc.

Program Options: WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- Some strategies to gain buy-in include (cont'd.):
 - Communicating the positive reasons for the program that will speak to colleagues
 - Lower absenteeism rates, lower turnover rates, higher productivity, and faster return to the workplace
 - Maintaining ongoing communication with both the breastfeeding employee and her co-workers to ensure that the program is working well.
- Formal and informal guidance from company managers and appropriate consultants
 - Can help with any adjustments that might be needed during implementation
 - [See Resource # 4 to View a Sample Feedback Form for Supervisors](#)

Program Options: WORKPLACE SUPPORT

- Mother-to-Mother Support
 - Value in sharing successful strategies for managing breastfeeding and working
 - Provide a monthly mothers' meeting during the lunch period, or facilitating an electronic discussion board on the company's Web site
 - Some lactation rooms provide a bulletin board or photo album for women to post photos of their babies and to share notes of encouragement.



Promoting Your New Program!

- Promotion builds support!
- Once in place the program should be widely promoted to:
 - Potential users (both breastfeeding employees and male employees whose partner may be pregnant)
 - Colleagues
 - Supervisors and managers



[See Resource # 3 to View an Example Program Announcement](#)

Promoting Your New Program!

- Other Possible avenues for promotion include:
 - Employee health fairs
 - Staff meetings
 - Open-house for the lactation room (serve refreshments, invite the media)
 - Newsletters or announcements on your company website
 - Outreach tables set up in prominent areas
 - Promotional packets for pregnant employees or their partners
 - Word-of-mouth
 - “Lunch and Learn” sessions
 - Baby showers for expectant employees and partners
 - Posters or bulletin board displays
 - Employee health benefits mailings or brochures
 - Company-wide email
 - Paycheck stuffers promoting the program



Evaluating Results

- Simple Process Evaluation Options
 - [Lactation Room Usage Log](#)
 - Kept in the lactation room, demonstrate use and determine future needs
 - [Exit Survey](#)
 - What women valued most about the program
 - Recommendations for improvement
- Employee Satisfaction Surveys
 - Measure satisfaction with the room, availability of the room, supervisor accommodation, usefulness of educational resources, duration of breastfeeding

Evaluating Results

- Simple Process Evaluation Options Cont'd.
 - [Feedback Form for Supervisors and Colleagues](#)
 - Addresses how well the program is being accepted, recommendations for improvement
 - Other Helpful Data (pre-program, post-program changes)
 - Absenteeism
 - Turnover
 - Health Care Costs
 - Breastfeeding duration among employees using the program

We're Here If You Need Us!

Congratulations on making this important business decision. We appreciate what you're doing for your business, your employees, and our county!

Please review the Workplace Lactation Support Resources folder on this disc for more information and tools you can tailor to use in your workplace

Feel free to contact us if you have questions, need help, or want someone to evaluate your progress.

Email the Portage County Breastfeeding Coalition at pcbreastfeeding@gmail.com or contact Kristi Cooley at (715) 345-5775.