

Worksite Lactation Support

Providing support for breastfeeding employees has a positive effect for organizations. For example, every \$1 invested in basic lactation programs, employers may see a \$2 return on investment. These savings are seen in such areas as: retention of experienced employees, reduction in sick time taken by both moms and dads for children's illnesses, and lower health care and insurance costs.

Employees who continue breastfeeding after returning to work need the support of their coworkers and supervisors in the workforce. Worksite lactation support can lead to healthier mothers, infants, and a healthier society overall.

The B.A.B.E. Breastfeeding coalition seeks to recognize regional businesses that are mother-friendly.



Tennessee Law (TCA 50-1-305)
Requires employers to provide daily unpaid break time for a mother to express breast milk for her infant child. Employers are also required to make a reasonable effort to provide a private location, other than a toilet stall, in close proximity to the workplace for this activity.
(1999 Tenn. Law, Chap. 161; SB 1856)

Pledge to develop a worksite lactation support program:

1. Provide space for employees to express milk in private (a lactation room)
2. Provide flexible breaks
3. Promote employee education about breastfeeding
4. Ensure effective communication of lactation support program to all employees

How to provide lactation support in the workplace

Provide a private space

Women who share a workspace need privacy to efficiently express milk. Being able to comfortably and safely express milk during the day is a primary concern of every breastfeeding mother returning to work. The space should be large enough to fit a chair and a small table to hold a breast pump. The space will need access to an electrical outlet, should have usable locks, and be located near a source of water and refrigeration. Employees should never be asked to express milk or breastfeed in a restroom. Breast milk is food, and restrooms are an unsanitary place to prepare food.

Establish milk storage options

Milk storage options should be discussed with the mothers that will be using the lactation rooms. Many women feel more comfortable storing their milk in a private refrigerator or cooler.

Allow flexible breaks

Women typically need 2-3 pumping sessions each day for approximately 15 minutes each. This does not include time to go to and from the lactation room, and can usually be managed within regular break times.

Provide opportunities for education

Education for expecting or breastfeeding employees maybe provided by employers or through referrals to community resources such as free hospital breastfeeding classes, health departments, support groups, and La Leche League peer counselors.

For a current list of regional resources, visit the BABE Breastfeeding Coalition website: <http://www.breastfeedingsupportnet.com>

Inform employees about your worksite lactation support program via printed information and offer a back to work consultation.

Quick tip:

Check with your organization's insurance carrier to explore policies and benefits for breastfeeding employees. Insurance companies may cover breastfeeding resources and services such as breast pumps or lactation consultation. Also, employees can now use pretax money from their flexible spending accounts to cover the cost of breast pumps and other supplies.