



Breastfeeding Support Policy

Effective Date: _____ Review Date: _____

Rationale

This Breastfeeding Support Policy was developed to provide employers with recommendations and guidance on ways to support employees who are breastfeeding.

Section 4207 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act revised the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) by requiring employers to provide:

- “1) A reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for one year after the child’s birth each time such employee has the need to express the milk; and
- 2) A place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.”

Note: The federal law only covers employees who are not exempt from section 7 of the FLSA. In addition, employers with fewer than 50 employees are not subject to compliance *if* the provision would impose an undue hardship. Undue hardship would be determined by the US Department of Labor by looking at the difficulty or expense of compliance for a specific employer in comparison to the size, financial resources, nature, and structure of the employer’s business.

This legislation has significant impact on worksite accommodations for women who breastfeed. According to the US Department of Labor, mothers with children under 1 year old had a workforce participation rate of over 55% in 2017. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends babies be breastfed for at least the first 12 months of life. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, roughly 80% of mothers in the United States initiate breastfeeding, and only 30% of babies are still breastfed at twelve months of age. [Click here](#) to view the CDC Breastfeeding Report Card to see how South Dakota compares.

There are many reasons why individuals who breastfeed are unable to breastfeed for as long as they desire, and returning to work is a primary factor.

Workplace barriers to continued breastfeeding include:

- Lack of privacy and time constraints
- Fear of being perceived as less productive

However employers can support breastfeeding employees by:

- Creating a culture of workplace support
- Providing adequate space and time to express breastmilk
- Demonstrating support from supervisors and colleagues
- Providing workplace education about breastfeeding at work

Benefits

Supportive breastfeeding policies and practices in the workplace not only benefit the employee but also provide a number of benefits to the baby and the employer.

For Employers

- *Productivity* – When support is provided, employees who breastfeed tend to have fewer absences and tardiness because their infants are more resistant to sickness.
- *Organizational Loyalty* – Employees often feel increased loyalty to the employer because it demonstrates that the agency supports the employee, their family, and their health.
- *Recruitment and Retention* – Employer support serves as a recruitment tool. Employees that offer lactation support programs often have higher retention rates for women employees, 94.2% compared to the national average of 59%.
- *Job satisfaction* – Having effective lactation support programs demonstrates care for employees and their health. Businesses that display support for their employees facilitate greater workplace satisfaction.

For Mothers

- *Productivity* – Lactation support programs in the workplace often demonstrate higher productivity. This is frequently attributed to a lessened emotional and psychological burden associated with being away from the baby, as well as higher energy and greater optimism.
- *Fewer Distractions* – Individuals who are able to express breast milk in the workplace are better able to concentrate during the workday. A breast infection and/or a drop in ability to produce milk can result if unable to express breast milk each time the employee feels the need to do so.
- *Absenteeism* – Individuals who use these programs and facilities exhibit lower absenteeism.
- *Health* – Breastfeeding can lower rates of diabetes, breast cancer, ovarian cancer, and postpartum depression for individuals who breastfeed.

For Babies

- *Health* – Breastfeeding passes on antibodies to babies, which help protect their immune systems from disease. Breastfed babies tend to have fewer and less severe instances of certain short-term illnesses, including bacterial meningitis, diarrhea, ear infections, respiratory infections, and urinary tract infections.
- *Obesity* – Babies who are breastfed have a reduced risk of both childhood and adult obesity.
- *SIDS* – Exclusive or partial breastfeeding is correlated with a decreased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).

Model Policy Guidelines

Business Name ensures the following policy and practices will be upheld to ensure a supportive workplace breastfeeding environment that complies with state and federal laws and demonstrates a culture of breastfeeding support and the role it plays in overall health and worksite wellness.

Business Name will:

1. Ensure protection and accommodation to ALL breastfeeding staff including employees, volunteers, trainees, and interns (herein referred to as employee).
2. Recognize the responsibility of a breastfeeding employee to both the individual's job and child when returning to work. We are aware that there are many health benefits associated with breastfeeding and that healthy employees and families benefit our business.
3. Support breastfeeding at work and demonstrate this commitment by helping employees continue breastfeeding when they return.
4. Allow breastfeeding employees to have flexible schedules and a reasonable amount of time for direct breastfeeding or expressing breast milk, acknowledging the frequency and duration of time necessary may vary depending on the needs of the employee.
 - a. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, employees can work with their supervisor to work an adjusted schedule or use leave.
 - b. Employers are not required to compensate for breaks taken to express breast milk. However, if an individual chooses to use an established compensated break time to express breast milk, they must be compensated as they normally would.
 - c. Time to travel to or from a provided location that is not in close proximity to the workspace is considered work time and does not require the employee to either make up the time or use leave.
 - d. The same accommodations and flexibility are available to employees when traveling.
5. Treat conduct that reasonably interferes with an employee's work performance, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment, or that inhibits a staff member's ability to breastfeed or express milk in accordance with this policy, as harassment. (i.e. disapproving comments or criticism of staff who use time for lactation; jokes, comments, or ridicule that may result in embarrassment for staff whether lactating or not; tampering with or theft of lactation equipment or stored pumped milk; altering or scheduling over break times or planned break times intended for lactation purposes.)
6. Provide employees with a private space, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion of others to directly breastfeed or express breast milk. While the space does not need to be exclusively dedicated to this purpose, a temporary space that meets best practices listed below is appropriate. All efforts will be made to ensure the space provided will be in close proximity to the employee's workspace.

- a. Each space should have a reasonable method of scheduling use (i.e. paper sign-up sheet, dry-erase board, or an online calendar schedule). Time allotted for scheduling is usually in 30 minute increments.
 - b. If the agency opens the space to visitors, clients, or the public, employee needs are the priority.
 - c. Employees are not required to use the private space if they do not prefer it. Employees may choose to express breastmilk in an alternate location, free from view, such as their own office or work space. The employee must ensure the noise is not disruptive to nearby coworkers.
 - d. Breastfeeding employees and visitors may breastfeed in any area where they and their child are authorized to be, whether or not the individual's breast or nipple is exposed as part of breastfeeding.
 - e. Individuals who directly breastfeed shall not dispose of diapers or other odorous materials in the space provided for breastfeeding or expressing milk. Individuals will ensure materials are stored properly in an area not used by other staff and taken home or disposed of each day.
 - f. Breastfeeding employees can store their milk in a workplace refrigerator; breastmilk is not hazardous bodily fluid and it is not a contamination danger.
7. Provide information about breastfeeding support and accommodation in break spaces where other mandated notices are displayed, in staff communications and on agency websites, and to new staff or volunteers during new employee training and orientation.
 8. Provide, at no cost to the employee, the following best practices in regards to physical environment and communication efforts to show our commitment to providing optimal breastfeeding support:

Physical Environment

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:	PREFERRED ELEMENTS:
<p>Clean, private space with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to electricity (outlets) • Comfortable seating • Ability to secure entry to avoid intrusion <p>Routine cleaning regimen for private space, provided by the business.</p> <p>Privacy signage</p>	<p>Access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refrigerator or personal cooler (to store expressed milk) • Multi-user breast pump (to pump more quickly and efficiently) • Sink with hot and cold running water (to clean breast pump supplies) • Microwave (to sterilize breast pump supplies) <p>Room décor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural or soft lighting • Clock • Full-length mirror to help mothers check/adjust clothing • Calming décor, comfortable temperature, and pictures of babies (to encourage milk flow) • Table for breast pump • Wastebasket

Communications

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:	PREFERRED ELEMENTS:
<p>Schedule/sign-up sheet for use of mother's room (online or posted)</p> <p>Program manager or contact person at organization available to answer questions re: nursing mother's program</p>	<p>Access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training/education for coworkers and supervisors on the necessity and benefits of expressing breast milk in the workplace• Bulletin board with information about lactation consultants, guidance counselors, pumping schedule, local events, etc.• Pamphlets or other educational materials on pregnancy, breastfeeding, parenting, etc.

9. Require use of the [Breastfeeding Accommodation Form](#). The form must be provided to all employees planning to take maternity leave with the expectation that it be returned 30 days prior to the expected maternity leave start date, if practical. This ensures the employee's supervisor(s) and employer are prepared to provide appropriate accommodations when the employee returns to work.

Compliance

Use the above recommendations as a guide for your business. Employers must ensure compliance with all federal and state laws at a minimum. Implementing a policy that will fit your business and benefit your employees is the overall goal, and policy compliance should be considered for this purpose. Your worksite wellness committee may be the perfect group to ensure this policy will remain a priority.

Final Statement

By implementing this model policy in its entirety or choosing to tailor this policy to your business' needs, you are taking a great first step in creating a healthy environment for the breastfeeding employees at your worksite!

Definition of Terms

- **Breastfeeding:** The method of feeding a baby with milk directly from the breast; suckling or nursing; giving baby milk from the breast.
- **Expressing Breast Milk:** The process by which an individual expels milk from the breast. Breast milk can be stored and fed to the baby at a later point in time. Milk may be expelled manually using the hands or with a pump especially designed for expressing breast milk.
- **Private Space:** A space that individuals can use to breastfeed or express milk. The space must be shielded from view and free from intrusion of others. There should be a place to sit and a flat space other than the floor to place the breast pump and other supplies. The space should provide access to electricity for use of the breast pump.

Resources/References

- 1) American Academy of Pediatrics Breastfeeding Recommendation <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/aap-reaffirms-breastfeeding-guidelines.aspx>
- 2) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/2013breastfeedingreportcard.pdf>
- 3) Drago, R., Hayes, J., & Youngmin, Y. (2010). *Better health for mothers and children: Breastfeeding accommodations under the Affordable Care Act*. Washington, DC: Institute for Women's Policy Research.
- 4) Eat Smart North Carolina: Businesses leading the way in support of breastfeeding <http://www.nutritionnc.com/breastfeeding/PDFS/ESMMBreastfeed-HiRez.pdf>
- 5) Murtagh, L., & Moulton, A.D. (2011). *Working mothers, breast feeding, and the law*. *American Journal of Public Health*, 101(2), 217-223.
- 6) Ortiz, J, McGilligan K, & Kelly P. (2004). *Duration of breast milk expression among working mothers enrolled in an employer-sponsored lactation program*. *Pediatric Nursing*, 30(2):111-119.
- 7) Ryan, A. S., Wenjun, Z., & Acosta, A. (2002). *Breastfeeding continues to increase into the new millennium*. *Pediatrics*, 110, 1103-1109.
- 8) Slavit, W.I. (Ed.). (2009). *Investing in workplace breastfeeding programs and policies: An employer's toolkit*. Washington, DC: National Business Group on Health
- 9) South Dakota Department of Health, WIC Program www.sdwic.org/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-information/
- 10) United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.t06.htm>
- 11) United States Department of Labor, Section 7(r) of the Fair Labor Standards Act – Break Time for Nursing Mothers Provision. https://www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers/Sec7rFLSA_btnm.htm
- 12) United States Office of Personnel Management, Guide for Establishing a Federal Nursing Mother's Program. <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/worklife/reference-materials/nursing-mother-guide.pdf>
- 13) Vennemann, M.M., Bajanowski, T., et al. (2009). *Does breastfeeding reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome?* *Pediatrics*, 123(3), 406-410.

