

# Breastfeeding Policy Toolkit



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# BREASTFEEDING POLICY TOOLKIT



The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed for about the first 6 months with continued breastfeeding alongside the introduction of appropriate complementary foods for 1 year or longer [2].

60% of mothers/parents do not breastfeed for as long as they intend to and factors such as :

- Unsupportive work policies and lack of parental leave.
- Cultural norms and/or lack of family support.
- Unsupportive hospital practices and policies [2].

## BENEFITS OF ADAPTING A BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY WORKPLACE

Breastfeeding yields many health benefits for both mothers/parents and babies. By promoting breastfeeding-friendly policies, your organization is looking out for the well-being of your employees, customers, and patrons.

**Myth:** Breastfeeding is hard on moms/parents!

**Truth:** Breastfeeding moms/parents report having more energy during the day than formula-feeding mothers/parents [1].

**Myth:** "It's not worth it [to breastfeed] if you're going back to work."

**Truth:** Breastfeeding early is often key to long-term success since this helps you build a large milk supply so you can pump breastmilk once you return to work. Employers are legally required to provide moms/parents with regular breaks and a private place to pump breast milk once they return to work. It takes planning, but breastfeeding is possible and beneficial for working moms/parents and their babies. Even if you're not sure, give it a try [1].

Healthy People 2030: increasing the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through 6 months to 42.4%, and increasing the proportion of infants who are breastfed at 1 year to 54.1% [4].

## HOW CAN YOUR ORGANIZATION HELP?

Your organization can help by simply creating or updating a breastfeeding policy and providing a private location for lactating employees to pump.

It is important that your employees, customers, and/or patrons know that your organization is supportive and breastfeeding-friendly.



**For any questions about creating a policy, please check out the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) in the appendix.**





## What if I already have a breastfeeding policy in place?

Do you have a policy already? Great! Below is a checklist to see if your policy meets the breastfeeding-friendly criteria.

- The written policy is routinely communicated to all new employees**

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- The written policies ensure that employees are provided adequate break time to express milk or breastfeed.**

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- Lactation spaces and equipment are readily available and clean for employees**

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- Educational materials such as brochures and posters are displayed in support of the policy**

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- A monitoring system is in place to ensure the compliance of the breastfeeding policy**

## AVAILABLE RESOURCES

For additional information and resources please visit the following websites:



### **REACH Team**

Georgia Southern University REACH Contact  
Nandi A. Marshall, DrPH, MPH, CHES, CLC, CDE  
(nmarshall@georgiasouthern.edu)

Healthy Savannah/YMCA of Coastal Georgia REACH Contact  
Margie Watson (margie@healthysavannah.org)



### **CDC**

<https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/index.htm>



### **Hero Database**

<https://herohelpme.com/>



### **Georgia State Laws**

<https://www.mamava.com/breastfeeding-law/georgia>



### **Federal Laws**

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/nursing-mothers>



### **The 2022 PUMP Act**

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/3110>  
<https://www.usbreastfeeding.org/pump-act.html>



### **Pumping Space Requirements**

<https://www.womenshealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work/what-law-says-about-breastfeeding-and-work>

## REFERENCES

- 1 Breastmilk Every Ounce Counts. (n.d.) Myths about breastfeeding. Retrieved from <https://www.breastmilkcounts.com/benefits/myths-about-breastfeeding/>
- 2 Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Breastfeeding Facts. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/facts.html>
- 3 Georgia Working on Health. (2019). Breastfeeding Friendly Policies. Retrieved from <https://dph.georgia.gov/working-on-health>
- 4 Healthy People 2030. (2020). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. Retrieved from <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/child-and-adolescent-development>
- 5 Women's Health. (2019). Supporting Nursing Moms at Work. Retrieved from <https://www.womenshealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work>

## ABOUT THE YMCA OF COASTAL GEORGIA/HEALTHY SAVANNAH REACH GRANT

In 2023, Healthy Savannah and the YMCA of Coastal Georgia were awarded \$1,021,899 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the first year of a new five-year Racial and Ethnic Approach to Community Health (REACH) grant (2023-2028). The REACH team will work to reduce health disparities among low-wealth, African American and Hispanic residents by increasing access to high-quality nutrition, safe places for physical activity, continuity of care for breastfeeding families, and access to adult immunizations. The local project is called Healthy Opportunities Powering Equity, or HOPE. With more than 20 community partners and organizations, the team has worked together and continues to elevate the health and wellness of our community through policy, systems, and environmental changes.

[www.ymcaofcoastalga.org](http://www.ymcaofcoastalga.org)

[www.healthysavannah.org](http://www.healthysavannah.org)

# APPENDIX

In the appendix, you will find Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on breastfeeding policies as well as a sample breastfeeding policy that can be adapted to your organization's needs.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Breastfeeding Policy Related**

- Why do I need a written breastfeeding policy?
  - A worksite health policy is a set of statements around the specific health-related practices promoted within your organization. Policies set direction, shape programming, and establish expectations for your organizational leadership and staff members. Creating a policy is your organization's commitment to operating in a certain way. Traditionally, a policy is developed first then used as the basis for establishing practices. Written policies are most effective and will eliminate any confusion regarding the specifics of the policy. Adopting a policy may be as simple as putting it in your organization's handbook [3].
- What should be included in a breastfeeding policy?
  - Your breastfeeding policy needs to meet the needs of your business or organization, your employees, and your environment. Your policy can include:
    - Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of this business or organization that are open to the general public.
    - This business or organization encourages all mothers/parents who breastfeed to continue to do so after returning to work.
    - Employees will be provided with flexible work schedules to accommodate breastfeeding or expressing breast milk [3].
- How often will I have to allow breaks for breastfeeding employees?
  - Breastfeeding parents need to pump as often as their child eats.
  - It is up to you to specify how these breaks work. If these breaks are a part of their normal breaks/meal times OR if they have to use personal leave if the time needed goes beyond provided breaks.
  - All breastfeeding employees have (specific number/time) for milk expression breaks in which they can pump.

- Will adding a breastfeeding policy disrupt my business or organization?
  - No. Incorporating breastfeeding policies create inclusive environments. Mothers/Parents will be more likely to return to your business if they feel comfortable breastfeeding after giving birth.

### **Lactation Space Related**

- What space accommodations do I have to provide nursing employees?
  - A private place other than a bathroom that is shielded from view and free of intrusions from coworkers and the public. Consider using existing rooms such as closets, storage areas, or providing a single person pop up tent [5].
- What should a lactation room include?
  - Electrical outlets, comfortable seating, lockers or hooks, small refrigeration, clean supplies, running water, a table, and a mirror. If you would like, you can include information about the benefits of breastfeeding [5].
- Will other employees think that breastfeeding mothers/parents are getting special treatment?
  - It's not easy, and working mothers/parents taking pumping breaks are not goofing off or trying to get out of work. They're taking care of a biological need to express milk and also improving the health of their families.
  - Supporting nursing mothers/parents in the workplace brings bottom-line benefits that help all employees.
  - Breastfeeding mothers/parents and their families have lower health care costs, are absent from work less often, and are more likely to return to work when there is breastfeeding support at work [5].
- Why can't employees pump in the bathroom?
  - Breast milk is food and should be handled in the same way other food is handled. No one would be willing to prepare food in a bathroom, and that includes breast milk. Bathrooms are not a sanitary place to prepare and handle food of any kind.
- Am I required to pay employees for pumping breaks?
  - No. Employers are not required to pay employees for milk expression breaks, although some companies choose to do so. If an employer already provides paid breaks. However, an employee who uses that break time to pump must be compensated in the same way other employees are compensated for break time. If extra time is needed because a mother/parent is pumping or expressing milk, that extra time can be unpaid [5]. However, if an employee is not completely relieved of their duties, the break time must be considered time worked.



# Sample Policy

## Policy Purpose

[Company Name] recognizes that breastfeeding is beneficial to both the mother/parent and baby. As a company, we want to support our employees and customers by providing an inclusive and equitable environment for mothers/parents to breastfeed.

## Policy Elements

[Company Name] subscribes to the following:

1. Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of this business or organization that are open to the general public.
2. [Company Name] encourages all mothers/parents who breastfeed to continue to do so, after returning to work.
3. Employees will be provided with flexible work schedules to accommodate breastfeeding or expressing breast milk.
4. All breastfeeding employees have (specific number/time) for milk expression breaks in which they can pump.

### 1. Policy Roles and Responsibilities

#### a. Company Responsibilities

i. [Company Name] has the following responsibilities in relation to breastfeeding employees:

1. Create a private place to express milk
2. Provide breastfeeding equipment
  - a. e.g. breast pumps, refrigerator, electrical outlet
3. Giving education to expectant and new mothers, fathers, and parents
  - a. e.g. Classes, pamphlets, brochures
4. Provide break time accommodations for two years once a parent:
  - a. Gives birth or
  - b. Begins providing milk for a nursing child
5. Provide break time to salaried and hourly employees.

#### b. Employee Responsibilities

i. Employees of [Company Name] have the following responsibilities in relation to breastfeeding in the workplace:

1. Have open communication with supervisors about your needs
2. Label your milk and properly store in the designated refrigerators
3. Maintain a clean lactation space
4. Should an adequate space not be provided, an employee must notify their employer of the non-compliance. An employee is allowed to pursue legal action if the employer does not come into compliance within 10 days of the non-compliance notification by the employee.

## **Policy Guidelines**

The following are the guidelines set by [Company Name]:

1. Employees will be able to use this policy for one year after their child's birth.
2. Breastfeeding employees should not be disturbed with work issues when using the lactation room.
3. If employees use their paid breaks to pump/express milk, they will be compensated as usual. Employees can use their lunch breaks for this purpose, too.
4. Employees should inform their supervisors when they want to use the nursing area to avoid confusion.
5. Supervisors aren't allowed to prohibit employees to use break time for breastfeeding and pumping/expressing milk. Doing so could result in disciplinary action.
6. Employees should not take break time when it's not needed or be consistently late to return. Doing so might violate our attendance policy.
7. Supervisors and the HR department are obliged to communicate this policy to employees.
8. All employees should support new mothers/parents. We will not tolerate comments, disturbance, or victimization of our employees.
9. If a lactating employee is not fully relieved of their duties during their pumping break time, the time will be counted as hours worked.