

# Making Breastfeeding Work for Employers



Dragon's Wagon Preschool, Holyoke, Colorado







## It's Good for Business

Providing support for new mothers at work is good for health and good for business! The Breastfeeding Friendly Employers program is available to provide support to help your business comply with Colorado and federal laws and improve your bottom line.

Hundreds of companies across America provide lactation support programs as part of their family-friendly benefits platform. They've learned that lactation accommodations at work produce a **3-to-1 return on investment** due to:

- **Lower health care costs due to healthier babies and moms**  
*Mutual of Omaha found that their newborn health care costs are three times less when employees participate in a lactation program. They save \$2,146 for each employee!*
- **Reduced rate of absenteeism due to infant illness (among both mothers and fathers)**  
*A major insurance company, CIGNA, found a 77% reduction in lost work time since babies who receive their mother's milk are healthier. The company saves more than \$60,000 per year in lower absenteeism rates.*
- **Lower turnover rates**  
*A 9-company study found that the average return-to-work rate is 94% when a lactation program is provided.*
- **Improved employee productivity and loyalty**  
*Many companies report that their employees are more productive and loyal when they provide women with lactation support, such as time and space to express milk while at work.*



### Mini-Grant funds Available

The Breastfeeding Friendly Employers program can help your business and/or worksites create lactation rooms, including mini-grants to fund furnishings and supplies for your space. Program staff will work hand-in-hand with you to conduct an assessment, develop a plan to become a Breastfeeding Friendly business, and recognize your business for your leadership in providing a breastfeeding friendly environment.

### Making Breastfeeding Work for Employers

**Accommodating nursing mothers in the workplace can work for YOUR business!  
Learn how!**

More than three out of every four women choose to nurse their baby, and many plan to continue once they return to work. Your support will make that possible! The requirements are simple: a clean private area to express milk and a short break every two or three hours.



## We Made Breastfeeding Work in Northeast Colorado



“One of our nursing mothers switches schools half way through the day so it is nice that we were able to give her a quiet place to pump as well as have a pump here for her to use so she doesn’t have to transport her personal pump from school to school.”

*Georgia Sanders  
Director at Hagen Early Education Center  
Sterling, Colorado*

“We chose to participate in the Breastfeeding Friendly Employers program through Northeast Colorado Health Department because we want to best support our parents and staff to have the healthiest life possible. Being breastfeeding friendly makes a positive environment for the families here at Little Folks.”

*Terry Curtis  
Owner of Little Folks Preschool  
Merino, Colorado*

“The YCA’s breast feeding corner is pretty nice. There is a nice rocking chair provided and a table. The table is located next to a plug in which is nice for when I have pumped. Overall I like the nursing corner for nursing and pumping.”

*Julia Feather  
Nursing Mother  
Yuma Children’s Academy  
Yuma, Colorado*



“The nursing corner at YCA provided a quiet, comfortable area for me to nurse my baby for a full year. I was not able to nurse my other children so I am very thankful for the space, time, and encouragement offered to help me provide for my child.”

*Sarah Edwards  
Nursing Mother  
Yuma Children’s Academy  
Yuma, Colorado*

## Accommodating Nursing Mothers at Work is the LAW

### Federal Law

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) was amended in 2010 with the passage of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, requiring employers to accommodate nursing women who wish to express milk for their infants during the work period. The law stipulates that employers must provide:

- Reasonable time
- Private space to express milk (that is not a bathroom)

### Colorado Laws

#### Colorado Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act

In 2008, Colorado lawmakers passed the Workplace Accommodations for Nursing Mothers Act that requires employers to make breastfeeding accommodations in the workplace by:

- Providing reasonable, unpaid break time or allowing an employee to use paid break and/or meal time to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to 2 years after the child’s birth.
- Making reasonable efforts to provide a nursing mother with a private location in close proximity to her work area (other than a toilet stall) in which to express milk.
- Not discriminating against women for expressing milk in the workplace.

#### Breastfeeding in Public Act

Colorado Revised Statutes §25-6-302 establishes that a mother may breastfeed in any place she has a right to be. This Act acknowledges that Colorado is involved in the national movement to recognize the medical importance of breastfeeding, within the scope of complete pediatric care, and to encourage removal of societal boundaries placed on breastfeeding in public.

#### Postponement of Jury Service for a Person Who is Breastfeeding a Child Act

Colorado Revised Statutes §13-71-119.5 (2.5) establishes that a person who is breastfeeding a child is eligible for two 12-month postponements of jury service.

### 5 Simple Steps to Compliance

1. Start the conversation about the needs of breastfeeding women in your workplace.
2. Complete the self-assessment and contact Boulder County Public Health to develop a plan based on the assessment.
3. Review, revise, or create a lactation policy or guidance document.
4. Identify space and time options that comply with the law.
5. Continue to promote and improve your lactation support services through employee education, manager training, regular policy and program reviews, and soliciting feedback from your breastfeeding employees.

Compliance is possible in nearly every work setting, and there are many resources to help. For more information about these laws, contact:

- Colorado Breastfeeding Coalition: [www.COBFC.org](http://www.COBFC.org)
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: [www.BreastfeedColorado.com](http://www.BreastfeedColorado.com)
- Colorado Department of Labor and Employment: <http://tinyurl.com/286p9r7>
- U.S. Department of Labor: [www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers](http://www.dol.gov/whd/nursingmothers)
- Northeast Colorado Health Department [www.nchd.org/breastfeeding-resources](http://www.nchd.org/breastfeeding-resources)

## Basic Needs of Employees

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that babies be exclusively breastfed for about the first six months of life. Continued breastfeeding, along with appropriate complementary foods, should continue for up to two years of age or beyond.

### Support

Nursing mothers at work need information, support, and simple accommodations to reach their infant-feeding goals. Providing a little extra break time and space to express their milk is a temporary need. Be sure to inform women about their nursing options prior to their maternity leave.

Employers and supervisors set the tone for an environment of support that enables women to feel comfortable and confident using lactation services, so don't forget to train supervisors on how to identify and respond to requests. Human resources staff is a valuable source of information to help both employees and supervisors find solutions that will work in your situation. Some companies also establish lactation policies to ensure that consistent support is provided for all women who need lactation services.

### Expressing Milk

Moms make milk continuously. To keep production high, women must either feed the baby directly or remove their milk with a breast pump about every 2-3 hours. Once the milk is removed, the body replaces the milk. If it is not removed, the amount of milk she makes declines.

Many women choose to express their milk when they are at work and cannot be with their babies. The milk can be safely stored in a small refrigerator in or near the lactation room, in an insulated lunch bag, or in a general employee refrigerator. Since the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) considers human milk to be food, not a biohazard, human milk can be safely stored in the employee refrigerator.

Potential liability from using breast pump equipment provided by the company is easily addressed by asking women to sign a release of responsibility to the company. If the business allows a caregiver to bring the baby to the mother during breaks for feedings, employees can sign a similar release of responsibility (see example at [www.babiesatwork.org](http://www.babiesatwork.org)).

### Did You Know?

A woman's nursing needs at work may change from time to time.

- Right after maternity leave, moms may need to express milk a little more frequently.
- When babies begin eating solid foods at around six months, many moms find they do not need to express milk as often.
- Babies also go through periods of rapid growth from time to time, requiring mom to add an extra milk expression session at work for a few days to keep up with the baby's demand. At other times, babies will seem to need less milk.
- Ongoing dialogue with women will help assure that their needs and the needs of the business are being addressed.

### Time to Express Milk

It takes around 20 minutes for most women to express their milk (not counting the time to get to and from the milk expression area), though some women might require a little longer at first. Most women do this about every 2-3 hours.

Most women are able to use their regular breaks or meal period and will clock in and out as usual. If extra time is needed, they can discuss options with their supervisor, such as taking it as unpaid time, coming in a little earlier or later, or taking a shorter meal period.

### Private Space

The law requires a business to provide a private area free from intrusion from coworkers and the public. Privacy can be assured with a lock on a door or signage that protects mom's privacy, covering windows as needed, etc. A quiet, private area will also help them to relax so milk expression is quicker and more efficient.

There are many options, including the employee's own office if it is private, the office of a coworker or supervisor, a conference room, or other small private area not in use. Many companies create a designated lactation space if they have more than one employee who would benefit from it. The room can be as simple or as elaborate as desired, and a space large enough to accommodate a chair and a flat surface for the pump is all that is needed. Ideally, the room will be located near running water and will include an electric outlet for plugging in the breast pump and a door that can be secured. The room cannot be a bathroom, however.



# Checklist for Employers

When an employee requests lactation accommodations, the following checklist can help you plan.

- Discuss the company’s lactation policy for supporting nursing women prior to the employee’s maternity leave, if possible, so you can make any needed arrangements while she is away.
- Praise her! Tell her you will support her decision to breastfeed.
- Assure that her direct supervisor and other relevant managers are aware of her needs.
- Review the employee’s typical work/break schedule to arrange for milk expression breaks.
- Arrange for coverage (such as using “floaters”) while she is away from her work station.
- Identify private space that is not a bathroom.
- Seek feedback from the employee and her supervisor.

Studies show that the U.S. could save more than \$13 billion in health care costs and save the lives of nearly 1,000 babies if 90% of women nursed their infants exclusively to at least 6 months of age. The U.S. Surgeon General has issued the *Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*, urging employers to provide basic lactation accommodations to help women continue to give their milk to their babies after returning to work.



## Worksite Self-Assessment

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_ Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Policy:** An explicit policy or set of guidelines outlining organizational support for breastfeeding employees

Progressing	Breastfeeding Friendly	Breastfeeding Advocate
<input type="checkbox"/> We do not have a breastfeeding policy. <input type="checkbox"/> Our breastfeeding policy is informal and is not written or regularly communicated to staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> We have a written breastfeeding policy but it is not regularly distributed or communicated to all employees. <input type="checkbox"/> We have a written policy and it is distributed or communicated to all employees at least once a year.	<input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding policy-related information is provided to all new hires. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding policy-related training is provided to all new managers. <input type="checkbox"/> Our insurance plan covers breastfeeding equipment or breastfeeding services OR we educate our employees on breastfeeding-related benefits available through the Affordable Care Act. <input type="checkbox"/> Our insurance plan notifies our employees that we are a breastfeeding-friendly workplace. <input type="checkbox"/> We contract with a lactation consultant to provide services for all breastfeeding employees.

**Time:** Workplace flexibility

Progressing	Breastfeeding Friendly	Breastfeeding Advocate
<input type="checkbox"/> There are significant barriers to mothers scheduling breaks and work patterns to provide time to breastfeed, express, or pump breastmilk during the workday.	<input type="checkbox"/> There are few or no barriers to mothers scheduling breaks and work patterns to provide time to breastfeed, express, or pump breastmilk during the workday.	<input type="checkbox"/> Employees can bring breastfeeding infants to work with them. <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare is available and accessible to employees and accommodates breastfeeding.

**Space:** Accessible, clean, private, and safe space other than a bathroom for employees to express or pump breastmilk

Progressing	Breastfeeding Friendly	Breastfeeding Advocate
<input type="checkbox"/> There are no designated breastfeeding rooms available. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding rooms are only available and identified as the need arises.	<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritized breastfeeding room(s) are identified and can be used by employees as needed. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding rooms are solely designated as breastfeeding room(s) for employees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Refrigerator space is prioritized for breastmilk storage in proximity to the pumping space. <input type="checkbox"/> A functioning sink is in proximity to the pumping space for employees to clean pumping equipment. <input type="checkbox"/> Breastfeeding-friendly messaging and/or graphics are around the workplace. <input type="checkbox"/> We have electric breast pumps available for breastfeeding employees. <input type="checkbox"/> We have pump kits available for breastfeeding employees. <input type="checkbox"/> We publicize that customers may breastfeed in public spaces.









## **Making Breastfeeding Work for Employers**

Thank you to the New York State Department of Health and Boulder County Health Department for information provided in this document.

**Breastfeeding Friendly Employers is a program provided by the Northeast Colorado Health Department.**



For more information about becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly business, visit

[www.nchd.org/breastfeeding-resources](http://www.nchd.org/breastfeeding-resources)

or call 970-522-3741