



Snohomish County Health Department • Lactation Friendly Environment (LFE)

The _____ is committed to providing support to families and staff who continue to offer human milk to their children while they are in a child care environment.

Purpose and Intent for the Child Care Policy

Child care providers play a vital role in supporting a parent's decision to continue breastfeeding. This policy outlines our commitment and support in encouraging the parents or employee's decision to continue to offer human milk to their child. The information in this policy meets the requirements of WAC 110-300, Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning Programs.

Background Information

Human milk offers the ideal nutrition for infants and toddlers to nourish and protect them from illness. It supports optimal growth and development for the first year of life. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months and supports continued breastfeeding as long as mutually desired by parent and child for 2 years or beyond ([AAP, 2022](#)). There are many benefits of human milk for children, parents, and child care providers. This includes reduced risk for childhood illness, health benefits for parents, and child cares can receive reimbursement for human milk through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>).

Policy Components

1. [All families will be familiarized with the lactation friendly environment \(LFE\) policy](#)
2. [Commitment to supporting the parents/employee's desire to continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school](#)
3. [All staff will be familiar with the lactation friendly environment \(LFE\) policy](#)
4. [Staff training](#)
5. [Guidelines for storing, handling, and preparing human milk](#)



1. All families will be familiarized with the lactation friendly environment (LFE) policy

We will discuss our commitment to support breastfeeding, including sharing our lactation friendly environment policy and resources, with all visiting and new families.

2. Commitment to supporting the parents/employee's decision to continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school.

a. Prior to the child starting care:

- We work with families to transition their babies to bottle or cup feedings
- We work with families to develop a feeding plan
- We will educate families on bringing human milk into the child care

b. Provide a place for feeding or pumping:

- We will provide a comfortable and private space for parents and staff to feed their child or to pump when they come to the child care center. This space will include a comfortable chair and small table near an electrical outlet and a clean sink nearby.

c. Commitment to supporting staff:

- Employees will be provided with [reasonable break times](#) to express milk. For time needed beyond usual break/lunch time, employees may work with supervisors to negotiate break times or other means of making up the time.

3. All staff will be familiarized with the lactation friendly environment (LFE) policy

We will discuss breastfeeding support with all staff and share this policy and breastfeeding resources.

4. Staff Training

New staff working with infants and toddlers will be trained within 30 days of hire and thereafter at least once every three years on:

- the benefits of human milk and the practices that support the parents' ability to offer it
- how to properly store, handle, and offer breast milk
- recognizing feeding cues and how to feed infants on demand
- the importance of always holding infants during feedings
- how to provide families with basic breastfeeding information, culturally appropriate educational materials, and referrals for breastfeeding support

5. Guidelines for storing, handling, and preparing human milk

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) both consider human milk to be "food" and not a "body fluid." As such, universal precautions are not necessary (gloves do not need to be worn when handling human milk) and human milk may be safely stored in the same refrigerator as other foods.

- Staff will wash their hands using proper handwashing technique before handling human milk.
- All bottles or storage containers will be labeled with the infant's first and last name and the date the milk was brought to the program.

- Human milk will be stored in a designated space within the refrigerator and freezer. This space should not be in the refrigerator door. The designated space will be: (*enter where the designated space will be here*) i.e., a bin labeled “breast milk etc.”
- Rotate storage containers so human milk with the oldest date is used first.
- Human milk is stored in a refrigerator at 39° F or less.
- Frozen human milk is stored at 0° F or less and will be stored for no more than 30 days.
- **Never microwave milk** to thaw or warm it.
- Frozen milk will be thawed in the refrigerator, under running water, or in a pan of warm water. **Thawed breast milk is never refrozen.**
- Human milk will be warmed under warm running water (under 120° F), or in a bottle warmer before feeding.
- Partially consumed bottles can only be used within 2 hours of warming.
- Partially consumed and unused, previously frozen human milk is labeled “do not use” and returned to the family when the child leaves at the end of their day ([WAC 110-300-0281](#)).
- Although human milk is not considered an “other potentially infectious material” (OPIM) by OSHA, in the event that an infant has been fed another child’s bottle of human milk, this shall be treated as an accidental exposure to an OPIM. The child care provider will inform the parents of the child who was given the wrong bottle and suggest that they notify the child’s health care provider of the exposure.
- The child care provider should also inform the family whose milk was accidentally fed to the wrong infant and ask if they would be willing to share any information about their health status with the family of the exposed infant. The child care licenser should also be informed of the occurrence and an incident report should be completed.
- Click [here](#) for more information on the storage and handling of human milk.

This policy should be reviewed annually and updated to incorporate new evidence-based research and practices, and is shared with all employees, expectant parents, families, and visitors.

Signed by: