



TOOLKIT: Building Blocks to Becoming a Lactation Friendly Environment Child Care

Snohomish County Health Department • Lactation Friendly Environment (LFE)

INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this document, we will be using the terms **lactation**, **nursing**, and **human milk**. We recognize that there are a variety of terms used and different ways of offering expressed milk to infants and toddlers. We desire to be inclusive of these differences in this document.

Although human milk is the ideal nutrition for infants, we recognize that some families have made the choice to offer formula. Formula has been designed as a suitable substitute for human milk for those who are unable to or who have chosen not to offer human milk.

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Lactation Friendly Environment (LFE) Introduction

We recognize that one of the barriers that families face when they return to work is how to continue to provide human milk to their child. Understanding the value of human milk for young children, we have created a program to recognize child care centers that have taken specific steps to make their program a Lactation Friendly Environment (LFE).

This program was developed by Snohomish County Health Department in partnership with the WA State Department of Health, the Breastfeeding Coalition of WA, and participation of Public Health—Seattle & King County.

What is a Lactation Friendly Environment (LFE) Child Care?

A LFE child care program works to promote, protect, and support lactation for families and staff. They understand and value the importance of human milk and that many families want to continue to offer their child human milk after returning to work. The LFE child care program provides a safe and welcoming environment for all families as well as their staff.

How to become a Lactation Friendly Environment (LFE) Child Care Program

We want to ensure that your staff is trained to support infants, toddlers, and their families. We provide assistance, including a toolkit, on what your child care center needs, to become recognized as a LFE program. The toolkit includes how to develop a policy on infant nutrition and feeding, human milk storage and handling, and how to create a comfortable environment for families and staff to nurse or pump. Once a child care completes the steps laid out in the toolkit, they will receive a LFE designation.

Why should my center or home support a Lactation Friendly Environment (LFE)?

Child care providers can play a crucial role in helping to remove barriers for families who want to continue to nurse and express human milk after they return to work. Returning to work can be incredibly stressful as a parent is trying to figure out how to maintain a strong milk supply that will enable them to continue nursing.

All families and your staff will benefit from a welcoming Lactation Friendly Environment, even children who are exclusively formula fed. This shows that you care about supporting the best feeding practices for children.

Child care support encourages families and staff to continue to offer the life-sustaining benefits of human milk that is uniquely made for the ideal nutrition and immune system

needs of their child. Human milk is the ideal source of nutrition for children, and it protects them by helping to decrease their risk for infections, SIDS, obesity, allergies, constipation, and diarrhea.

Providing human milk also helps your center/home financially as human milk is reimbursable by CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program).

The Lactation-Friendly Feeding designation can be used to market your center or home as a welcoming environment that supports best feeding practices. Your center/home can be listed on the Snohomish County Health Department website as a LFE program.

ASSEMBLE



1. Establish a policy that defines your commitment to supporting both families and staff who are nursing, that includes your feeding practices and procedures.

The Child Care will have a written policy that reflects their support and commitment to being lactation-friendly. The aim of this policy is to ensure consistency among staff to create an atmosphere where families and staff can feed their child(ren) or express human milk comfortably and confidently. It can also create an atmosphere of trust knowing that staff are trained to handle and store human milk safely.

At a minimum:

1. A written policy for families and staff which includes:
 - All staff, on hiring, are educated on the benefits of breastfeeding and the child care's policy that reflects support and commitment to being lactation-friendly.
 - Professional development for all staff caring for children ages 0-3, including the program director on the benefits of human milk, including proper storage and handling, infant feeding cues, and parent-child interaction during feeding.
 - Providing a clean, comfortable space for staff and families to feed, nurse, or to express human milk. Have individualized feedings plans including paced feeding, recognizing hunger cues, and coordinating feedings to meet the needs of the family.
 - Proper storage and labeling of expressed human milk.
2. The policy is reviewed annually and updated to incorporate new evidence-based research and practices.
3. Staff working with children of 0-3 years of age will renew their professional development training on infant feeding every three years.

4. There should be a clear statement that your site welcomes and supports families who want to continue to offer human milk to their children for as long as desired.
5. Enrolled families are provided a copy of the policy and informed that staff are committed to support their feeding goals.
6. All parents, if possible, are included in the discussions about lactation and feeding.

Policy Samples

[Snohomish County Policy Sample Template](#)

[Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute \(PDF file\)](#)

[Fargo, North Dakota Sample Policy \(PDF file\)](#)

2. **Provide a clean, comfortable, and private space for feeding or pumping of human milk.**



Having a space for families and staff that is comfortable and sanitary to nurse or express milk is all that is needed to help families adjust to having children in care and supporting their feeding goals.

It's also one of the new requirements under the Foundational Quality Standards for Early Learning ([WAC 110-330](#)).

While having a stand-alone room for feeding children or pumping human milk is nice, it is certainly not necessary. The space should contain, or have easy access to, a sink and refrigerator. This space can be a separate room, or a section of a room screened from view by a wall, screen, or shelves. It must have a comfortable chair, a table for a pump, and an electrical outlet. Other amenities could include a washable pillow or

cushion, a footstool, a lamp for low light, a place to display a picture of the infant, and suitable reading materials. Staff should all be trained to show families where they can go to feed or pump.

Parents should be informed that they may choose to nurse their babies in the child care space if they are comfortable doing this. This could normalize nursing for the other children, and possibly other parents. [WAC 110-300-0285](#)

NOTE: a bathroom is NOT considered an acceptable or sanitary space per [RCW 43.10.005](#).

BUILD



1. Train all staff who work with infants, toddlers, and children.

Communicate to all staff working at the child care center, the center's commitment to be a welcoming lactation-friendly environment. Ensure all staff working with infants, toddlers, and children, including the director, are trained in the skills to support and promote the feeding of human milk.

At a minimum, this includes:

All staff, including substitutes and program director, working with infants, toddlers, and children:

- Have been made aware of the center's lactation/human milk policy and commitment to be a lactation-friendly environment within 30 days of hire
- The required trainings including the topics below should be completed within 90 days of hire.
- Professional development on promoting and supporting offering human milk and lactation:
 - Benefits of lactation and human milk for mother and baby
 - Benefits of supporting human milk for Early learning programs and CACFP
 - Promoting lactation and supporting nursing families
 - Supporting Breastfeeding staff
 - Infant feeding cues
 - Proper storage and handling of human milk
 - Bottle-feeding a nursing baby

- Developing a feeding plan
- Resources that support lactation
- Program policy on promoting and supporting lactation and feeding human milk
- Providing an appropriate area for expressing and feeding of human milk

All staff, including substitutes and program director, that care for children ages 0-3 years, are required to retake the trainings with the above criteria every 3 years.

Approved Resources for training:

UW Nourish Active Early Learning Healthy Kids, Healthy Future Breastfeeding Support
 Healthy Kids, Healthy Future: Breastfeeding Support (thinkific.com)

[Snohomish County Health Department LMS Courses](#) are free and offer 2 STARs credits.

2. Establish a feeding plan for every child.

[WAC 110-300-0285](#): The child care must provide a plan for each child.

[WAC 110-300-0190](#): Parent or guardian provided food and written food plans.

A written food plan must be developed by the provider and a child's parent or guardian, signed by all parties, and followed.

Sample feeding plans

[New Mexico Breastfeeding Task Force - Sample Infant Feeding Plan](#)

[Snohomish County Health Department Infant Feeding Plan](#)

3. Educate new and existing families about your human milk feeding practices & policy.

- Provide families with your written policy for promoting and supporting breastfeeding and the use of human milk, including milk storage and feeding guidelines.
- Share information about staff training practices.

- For many families, the return to work and separation from their baby can make it challenging to continue breastfeeding or offering expressed milk. When child care centers provide support and encouragement for nursing parents, it can make it easier for families to continue to nurse their babies.
- Education could include but is not limited to: information in a parent handbook or orientation materials; handouts explaining your child feeding policies, guidelines for milk storage, and labeling; and verbal information shared during a tour (for example, pointing out where parents can nurse when they are at the facility, or showing how the milk is labeled for each child).

Sample documents from Carolina Global Breastfeeding Institute:

[Sample Poster](#)

[Sample Infant Feeding Plan](#)

[Sample "What Moms Can Do" Handout](#)

4. Provide families with lactation and infant feeding resources available in the community.

It is important to have access to resources for participant, family and child support with feeding. We should be able to offer referrals and resources from the community to our participants. Resources for training, supplies and how to find answers to “typical” or “general” questions regarding lactation and infant feeding of human milk.

Snohomish County-Specific Resources and Materials for Families:

[Lactation Coalition of Snohomish County Resource Guide](#)

[Lactation Coalition of King County Resource Guide](#)

[La Leche League of West Snohomish County](#)

[Providence Women’s & Children’s Health Services](#) – Prenatal classes, family education, lactation support, Mother’s Milk Depot, and Safe Kids classes and support

[Swedish/Edmonds](#) – Lactation support and breastfeeding classes

[EvergreenHealth](#), Monroe – Lactation support and breastfeeding classes

Statewide resources:

[Breastfeeding Coalition of Washington](#) – provides contact information for local and regional coalitions

[WA State Department of Health Resources](#)

[La Leche League of Washington](#)

[International Lactation Consultant Association](#)

CONTINUE



1. Ensure all breastfeeding related staff training continues each year.

- Importance of continuing training
 - Staff that are trained in and reminded of the importance of the benefits of human milk and infant and toddler nutrition are better able to support the families they serve with current and knowledgeable guidelines.
 - Staff that receive ongoing training in infant/toddler feeding are better able to respond to infant hunger cues, understand the value of on-demand feeding, and are better able to work with families to help develop individual feeding plans.
 - Staff that receive annual reviews of safety guidelines in the storage and handling of human milk help to assure that the center is following recommended guidelines and families are reassured that the human milk they bring in is handled and stored properly.
- Where to find the most up to date information/resources.
 - Snohomish County Health Department Child Care Classes and resources
 - [Child Care Provider Resources and Services](#)
 - [Breastfeeding](#)
 - Nourished and Active courses
 - [Nourished and Active in Early Learning Trainings \(thinkific.com\)](#)
 - CDC
 - [Recommendations and Benefits | Nutrition | CDC](#)

- [Guidelines & Recommendations | Nutrition | DNPAO | CDC](#)
- Washington State Department of Health
 - [Lactation, Breastfeeding & Chestfeeding](#)

2. Provide children lactation-friendly feeding education and play opportunities.

Children will be provided opportunities to experience age and developmentally appropriate lactation-friendly education while in care. Education will be provided through group activities and will involve many modalities to support learning in the classroom. These modalities may include books, puppets, baby dolls in a wide range of races and ethnicities, puzzles, stories and much more. The following list includes books and resources for providers to utilize to provide developmentally appropriate education in the classroom.

List of books/resources for providers

Picture and coloring books that show humans and animals, especially mammals, feeding their young.

- [Mom is Breastfeeding coloring book - Noodle Soup](#)
- [Free Breastfeeding Coloring Book Printable — Milkology®](#)
- Mama’s Milk – by Michael Elsohn Ross
- We Like to Nurse – by Chia Martin
 - His new edition of the Hohm Press classic, We Like to Nurse, is presented in the Chinese language
- [Best Milk: African American Edition](#)
- Breastmilk Makes My Tummy Yummy: Cecilia Moen
- The Wonders of Mother's Milk [Mishawn Purnell-O'Neal](#): a multicultural children’s book
- Ziora's Quest: Mommy's Milk Rocks! – by Dr. Amaka Nnamani

Lessons/activities about animal mothers and babies and how animal babies are fed.

- Supermom and The World is Full of Babies! – by Mick Manning

- If My Mom Were a Platypus: Mammal Babies and Their Mothers – by Dia L. Michels
- Babies Nurse / Así se alimentan los bebés - by Phoebe Fox
- Basic nutrition lessons to include breast/ human milk and its importance in infant's growth and development: [Preschool Lesson Plans \(Florida Department of Health\)](#)

Other ideas

- Informal, matter-of-fact discussions about how babies in the program (or other human babies) are fed – their mothers' milk, formula, solid foods.
- Honesty and openness in responding to questions and discussing breastfeeding with older children in the center or home.
- Nursing coverlets as well as, or instead of, baby bottles in the dramatic play area.
- Private invitations to nursing mothers, including staff, to breastfeed their babies in the child care area if they are comfortable doing this.

3. Display breastfeeding related imagery and/or resources that are culturally appropriate.

As a child care provider, it is important to create an environment that is supportive and respectful of all families, including those who are breastfeeding. This means being mindful of the different cultural norms and beliefs surrounding breastfeeding and ensuring that any imagery or resources related to lactation and feeding are clearly displayed.

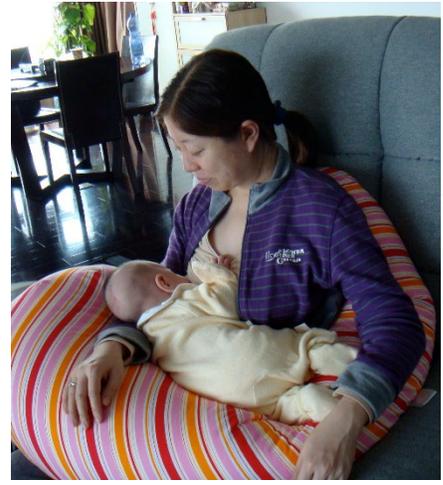
- The following are some considerations that you may want to implement in your child care:
- Respect maternal and family beliefs and values related to breastfeeding.
- Consider religious, cultural, or personal beliefs and practices, such as modesty, privacy, or preference for formula.
- Consider cultural beliefs and practices around infant and young child feeding, such as traditional weaning practices (different cultures have different ages for weaning).
- Display imagery that represents families of different cultures and backgrounds.



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- Provide lactation resources and support in the family's native language when possible
 - [UNICEF UK Foreign Language Resources](#)
- Avoid images or messages that promote formula or bottle-feeding over breastfeeding

Resources for providers:

[Breastfeeding Resources](#) – Office on Women's Health

[Breastfeeding Resources Library](#) – CDC

[Overweight & Obesity Resource Library](#) – CDC

[Cultural Sensitivity for Better Breastfeeding Outcomes](#) – The National Institute for Children's Health Quality

[Strategies to Promote and Enhance Breastfeeding with Cultural Awareness](#) – Nebraska Extension (University of Nebraska)

Resources for families:

[La Leche League International \(LLLl\)](#) – A non-profit organization that provides support, information, and resources for breastfeeding mother

[Breastfeeding at home, at work, and in public](#) – Office on Women's Health