

Support Breastfeeding in your Home Child Care

Many mothers with young children are choosing or planning to breastfeed their babies. Research demonstrates that breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for infants. Many mothers must to return to work and face the challenges of continuing to breastfeed, and this can be difficult. How can we as caregivers support breastfeeding?

Why support breastfeeding?

The benefits of breastfeeding have been scientifically established and recommended by doctors and other health practitioners. The American Academy of Pediatrics says, "Breast milk is best for infants."

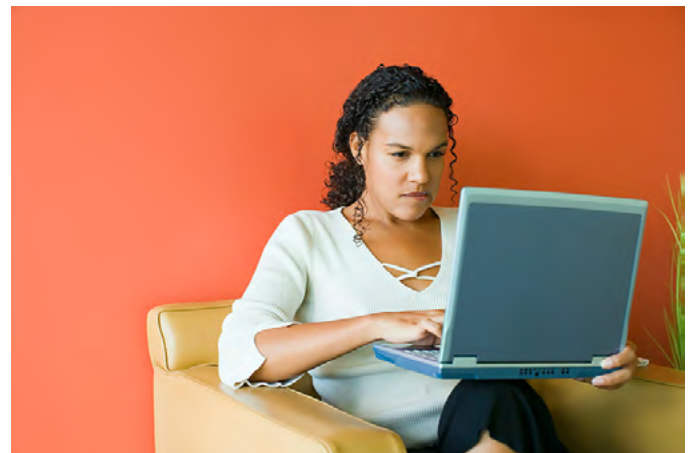
Research in breastfeeding has shown the following benefits:

- Breast milk is the perfect nutrition for a growing baby
- Breast milk protects the baby against illness such as ear infections, and lowers the risk for asthma, allergies, diabetes, and leukemia later in life
- Babies who are breastfed are less likely to be obese or overweight later in life
- Breastfeeding supports bonding and attachment of mother and child
- Breastfed infants are more likely to stop eating when they are full
- Breastfed infants are more likely to try a variety of foods when they start eating baby foods and later, family foods
- Nutrients in breast milk change to meet the baby's needs both with the age of the baby and through the day

Quality support

Before we can support breastfeeding in our child care, we need to ask ourselves:

- What do I need to know to support breastfeeding?
- What extra planning might breast feeding require?
- How can I offer support to the nursing mother/family and to myself as a caregiver?"



Get as much information as you can find to learn more about breastfeeding. The American Academy of Pediatrics, the La Leche League, and United States Breastfeeding committee are valuable resources, as well as any local resource, such as a local hospital. Also, many doctor's offices have breastfeeding consultants.

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Breastfeeding: provide comfort and support

Parents, particularly mothers, need to know that you will support them in breastfeeding. Here are some tips to help you know what to do:

- Talk with the mother and/or family to find out their wants, needs, ideas, and expectations concerning breastfeeding
- Be sensitive to families from different cultures and different opinions
- Have a comfortable chair with arms and a pillow for nursing
- Let moms know they are welcome to breastfeed in your child care home
- Offer mothers a private place where they can go to breastfeed or express milk
- Provide materials to support breastfeeding, such as brochures, pamphlets, or contacts
- Provide refrigerator and freezer space for mothers to store expressed breast milk
- Help the other children in your program understand what is going on by explaining breastfeeding in a way they can understand
- Never give a baby formula or other infant foods unless clearly stated by the mother
- Encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding as long as possible
- Be sure all families are aware of your support of breastfeeding

