

Baby Friendly Spaces Program Guide



Breastfeeding *welcome here*

Thank you for being part of the Regina Baby Friendly Spaces Program. The Baby Friendly Spaces Program allows businesses and organizations to let families know that they support families feeding their children anytime and anywhere in their space.

This guide is available online at <http://www.reginakids.ca>. Please share this guide with your staff and leave it an area accessible to staff. Please feel free to email it to your staff.

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A. What does it require to be a Baby Friendly Space?

A Baby Friendly Space:

1. Encourages families to feed their children anytime, anywhere. If families ask for a quiet space, one is provided if possible.
2. Has staff and volunteers who are aware of how to make their business or organization a Baby Friendly Space.
3. Lets the public know that the business or organization is a Baby Friendly Space.

B. Background about Baby Friendly Spaces

Why do we need a Baby Friendly Spaces Program?

Baby Friendly Spaces support all families to be able to respond to their children's hunger cues in public. Because it is recognized that families that breastfeed in public encounter stigma around their feeding practices, Baby Friendly Spaces programs exist throughout Canada. Although, many families feed their infant with no problems in public every day, a Baby Friendly Spaces Program has shown to encourage families to do so. Businesses and organizations can still be Baby Friendly and not be registered for the Baby Friendly Space Program.

Breastfeeding a child has shown to have numerous health, social, economic and environmental benefits to both the child, the family and the community. See page 6: "Backgrounder: About Breastfeeding"

About the Baby Friendly Spaces Program

This program is an initiative of the Regina Community Breastfeeding Advisory Committee which is part of the Regina and Area Early Years Network. Information about the network can be found at:

<http://www.reginakids.ca/regina-childrens-initiative/community-development-and-partnerships>

For more information, contact us at babyfriendlyspaces@saskhealthauthority.ca.

Why Become a Baby Friendly Space?

While your business or organization may already support breastfeeding in principle, many breastfeeding women need the reassurance that breastfeeding is allowed and supported. The Baby Friendly Spaces Program formally acknowledges a woman's human right to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. Research has shown that families support businesses that have formally acknowledged a woman's human right to feed her child anytime, anywhere.

Families can meet the needs of the child and not rush out to care for the child. This results in spending more time at the business or organization. In similar initiatives, those that participated experienced a tremendous amount

of positive community recognition but also found an increase in business from families with children. When families are allowed to tend to the needs of their child within your business or organization, they are more likely to use your services or purchase your goods and results in repeat visits.

Use your efforts to your advantage. Advertise your business or organization as a Baby Friendly Space.

Baby Friendly Spaces are designed to support all families to be able to respond to their child's hunger cues within public spaces. The program does focus on breastfeeding because women who breastfeed are more likely to encounter stigma around feeding their children in public. This stigma affects a family's decision to breastfeed their child.

C. Example of a Staff Training Session

Provide an initial introduction to staff to describe the program and why breastfeeding is important. Make sure everyone understands that it is not only beneficial for the organization but that it is important to be supportive for greater causes, the mother, the baby, the community and the environment.

Review a few procedures or your policies that encourage how to accommodate a mother wanting to breastfeed within your organization.

Brainstorm and create a list of quiet or more private place to feed in your space. A small clean space (separate from the washroom) with a chair is all that is required.

Discuss some other ways that you can further support a feeding family's comfort.

Discuss some steps in dealing with customers/clients who may express concerns. Include when to ask customer or client to have a further conversation with the supervisor or manager.

Post and share the Poster - ***Creating a Welcoming Baby Friendly Space – Staff and Volunteer Tips.***

D. Optional Actions

While the suggestions listed within this kit are a minimum standard in supporting breastfeeding women, additional actions can also elevate the level of support. This includes but is not limited to:

- Follow the World Health Organizations Code for Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes.

http://www.thebcs.ca/documents/position%20statements/BCS_Position_Statement_WHO_Code_of_Marketing_of_Breastmilk_Substitutes.pdf

- Create a policy or procedure specific to your business that will help your employees support breastfeeding families. A policy or procedure ensures that the organizations stay Baby Friendly with management and staff changeover, it allows staff support if a concern about breastfeeding is encountered, and allows people who supervise staff a way to ensure that their staff are held accountable. (It is important to note that, regardless of a policy, it is a woman's right to breastfeed anytime, anywhere).
- Participate in World Breastfeeding Week in October. An email will be sent with ideas for how to be involved.
- Create a parent's room or have a space for parents to change diapers. This is also valuable when hosting off site events such as BBQ's or other special events. Make a poster so parents are easily able to identify that it is a Baby Friendly Space.
- Ensure pregnant staff, upon their return to work, have accommodations available to continue breastfeeding. Many union contracts have clauses in place.

Sample Policy

Having a policy statement is an effective way to ensure that all staff are aware that the organization supports families to breastfeed their children anytime, anywhere.

Policy Statement:

_____ (name of organization) recognizes:

- Breastfeeding is a protected human right and families have the right to breastfeed anytime, anywhere.
- That breast milk is the optimal food for healthy growth and development and supporting the breastfeeding relationship provides many benefits to the organization, the child, family and community.
- _____ (name of organization) protects and supports the feeding relationship by:
 - Ensuring the family can feed their child anywhere, anytime within the organization,
 - Ensuring a woman who chooses to breastfeed is not asked to move or cover up,
 - The breastfeeding family is unaware that a concern has been expressed about their chosen method of feeding, and
 - If a family requests a more private location to feed, their accommodation is requested to the best of the organizations ability.

More examples can be viewed at:

<http://novascotia.ca/dhw/healthy-communities/documents/Breastfeeding-support-kit.pdf>

E. Backgrounder – About Breastfeeding

Health Canada recommends that babies be fed only breast milk for the first 6 months of their lives. Breastfeeding is recommended to continue after solid foods are introduced up to 2 years of age or longer.

Breastfeeding a child has shown to have numerous health, social, economic and environmental benefits to both the child, the family and the community. Here are some:

- Breast milk is custom-made by each mother for her own baby. It contains the perfect amount of protein, carbohydrate, fat, vitamins and minerals. As babies grow, the milk changes to meet the babies' needs. Human milk is easier than formula to digest.
- Breast milk contains valuable antibodies that help prevent disease.
- Research shows that children who were breastfed score higher on IQ tests, as well as on teacher ratings of their academic performance.
- When breastfeeding, parents don't have to boil water or sterilize bottles. This is the safest way to feed a baby. Since breast milk is always with mom, travelling and shopping with baby is simpler with no equipment to carry or refrigeration needed.
- Research suggests that breastfeeding provides mothers some protection against breast cancer, ovarian cancer and weak bones later in life.
- Any amount of breast milk is always good for babies, regardless of their age.
- Breastfeeding saves families hundreds of dollars.
- Human milk is produced and delivered without any pollution, unnecessary packaging or waste.

Adapted from Public Health Agency of Canada, 10 Great Reasons to Breastfeed
http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/dca-dea/stages-etapes/childhood-enfance_0-2/nutrition/reasons-raisons-eng.php

One of the main reasons women quit breastfeeding is the perception of not enough milk. Women need to breastfeed their child on demand to produce breast milk. Skipping feeds can decrease breast milk production. When women do not feel comfortable feeding in public it can lead to skipped feeds or supplementing their child with formula or solid foods. Mothers also can become isolated because of the worry about breastfeeding in public. We recognize that there are skills and knowledge involved in helping mothers to breastfeed; however evidence shows us that giving education alone without the supportive environment does not result in behaviour change. Knowledge without good support can make moms feel guilty. Although there needs to be support from family and health practitioners, this initiative focuses on community.

While this initiative has a strong emphasis on the breastfed child, Baby Friendly Spaces will support all families to feed their child by whatever method they choose.