



Maintaining a Breastfeeding Supportive Environment

Talking points to encourage coworker support and value of worksite lactation programs.

Concern: What is the big deal about breastfeeding?

Supporting breastfeeding is imperative for improving employee and community health.

- **The U.S. Surgeon General** recognized the need to increase breastfeeding as a priority and has initiated a call-to-action for the nation, including employers.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics and all major health organizations recommend that all infants, with rare exception, receive nothing but breast milk for the first six months of life, with continued breastfeeding through the first year of life and beyond.
- Infants who are not breastfed as recommended are at excess risk for infection, hospitalization for respiratory diseases, asthma, diabetes, leukemia, sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), and obesity.
- Mothers who are unable to breastfeed as recommended are at risk for breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and slower recovery from childbirth.
- Lack of requests for breastfeeding support (by employees of their employers) does not suggest that a considerable need does not exist.

Concern: Why is our company spending money to implement this policy?

Comprehensive lactation support policies are worth the investment.

- Your company can't afford NOT to implement a lactation-support program.
- The fastest growing segment of women in the workforce is women with children under age 3. If you alienate this group, you can significantly deplete the pool from which you draw your workforce.
- Costs are also minimal. Little is required to establish a policy, environment, and program of support.
- Lactation programs have a proven return on investment. For every \$1 invested, there is a return of up to \$3. The better the program, the greater the return on investment. Any immediate costs incurred can be offset in the longer term with improved retention rates, lower absenteeism costs, increased loyalty, employee productivity, and positive public relations.
- Investments made now have not only an immediate return but result in a healthier, more productive workforce from the next generation of workers.



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Manager Talking Points To Handle Coworkers' Concerns



Concern: It's unfair that other employees don't get the same amount of [often unpaid—customize for your worksite if you offer paid lactation breaks] unpaid break time.

Our business benefits by supporting breastfeeding. This means a more productive workforce and a more evenly distributed workload for each individual employee.



Worksite lactation support and increased breastfeeding result in lower turnover, reduced absenteeism for care of a sick child by both male and female employees, earlier return to work and higher retention of employees after childbirth as well as fewer childhood illnesses at employees' homes, resulting in fewer germs in the workplace.



Breastfeeding accommodations are only temporary.



Any coworker would be entitled to the same benefit if they were in similar need of worksite lactation support.



Staff who are uncomfortable with the concept of breastfeeding may need education to understand that breastfeeding a child is a positive practice that needs reinforcement.



There is an organization policy that states an expectation of a culture of support.



Where applicable, remind them of the federal requirements related to the accommodation of nursing employees.

For more information visit
dshs.texas.gov/TexasMotherFriendly



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