

Implementation Guide

For Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare

"I was so excited to be a part of this program, as it is very special and unique. I have been in business for 29 years and I am always looking for ways to improve the quality of my childcare. I also promote the program to other providers I know. I was able to share with some new providers my breastfeeding space for mothers and encourage them to do the same at their site."

– Childcare Provider, San Diego, CA

SECTION TWO

Welcome

Provided in this section is the information needed for organizations to administer a breastfeeding-friendly childcare program. This section includes trainings, policies, procedures, and best practices.

"Because breastfeeding is so important for all babies and their mothers, I am prepared to support and encourage all parents participating in Breastfeeding-Friendly/Pro-Lactancia San Diego. In recognition of the importance of this educational opportunity, I twice attended the trainings offered in order to deepen my knowledge. I feel all of us should attend all educational opportunities, and I am constantly seeking opportunities to learn."

– Childcare Provider, San Diego, CA

Getting Started

HOW AN ORGANIZATION ADMINISTERS A BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY PROGRAM WITH CHILDCARE PROVIDERS MAY DIFFER DEPENDING ON THEIR STRUCTURE.

Consider the following:

- Do we have the support to implement this program?
- How do we connect with experienced partners?
- How do we engage childcare providers?

Ensure Support

Gaining the support of key decision-makers within the organization is crucial. Utilize the talking points below to encourage adoption of the program.

The below points can be shared with leadership.

- **Breastfeeding is good for baby, good for families, and good for childcare.**
Review the '[Benefits of Breastfeeding](#)' to make the case for implementing a breastfeeding-friendly program. Focus on benefits that align with the organization's mission, vision, and goals.
- **Almost everything needed to implement a breastfeeding-friendly childcare program is available in this guide.** Trainings, materials, and resources are provided. Any of the sample resources can be adapted to meet organizational needs.
- **A breastfeeding-friendly childcare program offers sustainability.**
The program's policies and procedures sustain breastfeeding-friendly practices. Program maintenance can be structured to require minimal technical assistance or follow up from program organizers.

The below points can be shared with childcare providers.

- **Becoming breastfeeding-friendly can be used as a quality indicator.** Support for breastfeeding can help set a childcare provider apart. Implementing breastfeeding-friendly practices is marketable and may help increase referrals.
- **Supporting breastfeeding requires minimal resources.** Childcare providers can support breastfeeding families by making small modifications to their environments and practices. Many providers are already supporting breastfeeding in some way.
- **Information and resources to support breastfeeding families is provided.** There is no need to be a lactation expert to implement breastfeeding-friendly practices. Learning how to support breastfeeding families does not require extensive training or time.

Identify Partners

Collaborating with other organizations that have experience in early childcare and breastfeeding is important and adds value to breastfeeding-friendly childcare programs.

Consider utilizing partnerships to recruit childcare providers, provide breastfeeding expertise and materials, market the program, leverage recognition resources, and educate families.

Consider the following:

- What organizations in my community support breastfeeding?
- Where do childcare providers in my community go for resources?
- What organizations in my community convene childcare providers?

Varieties of organizations in the community support breastfeeding. Consider collaborating with community organizations such as the local YMCA, breastfeeding coalition, healthcare providers, social services agency, or Childcare Resource and Referral agency.

Breastfeeding-Friendly San Diego (BFSD) worked with multiple organizations to develop partnerships that enhanced the program. See *Table 1* for examples of some of the partnerships that elevated the BFSD program.

MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONSHIPS

Consider collaborating with organizations that also benefit from the partnership. These mutually beneficial relationships elevate the work and add value. The BFSD program benefited from such a relationship with the WIC Regional Breastfeeding Liaisons (RBLs). The RBLs provided the expertise for training content and co-taught the BFSD trainings, while BFSD coordinated the trainings with partners and provided technical assistance. Both received credit for the work—a perfect match!

Table 1: Breastfeeding-Friendly San Diego Partnerships

Partner	Service Provided
<u>Chicano Federation</u>	Assisted with childcare recruitment Promoted and hosted trainings
<u>Neighborhood House Association – Early Head Start</u>	Assisted with childcare recruitment Promoted and hosted trainings
<u>San Diego County Breastfeeding Coalition (SDCBC)</u>	Promoted BFSD program to families Recognized childcare providers Provided sustainability
<u>Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Regional Breastfeeding Liaisons (RBLs)</u>	Assisted with designing training content Co-taught trainings Provided breastfeeding expertise Provided WIC resources
<u>YMCA Childcare Resource Service</u>	Assisted with childcare recruitment Promoted and hosted trainings Provided childcare expertise

Engage Childcare Providers

Engaging childcare providers is an essential component in operating an effective program. From recruiting providers to assessing needs, a bit of planning and intentional action creates a path to program success.

Consider the following:

- How can my organization reach childcare providers in our community?
- What is the best way to connect and communicate with childcare providers?
- Would childcare providers in our community prefer electronic or paper resources?

Recruit, Enroll, Assess, Implement, and Recognize

RECRUIT

There are many ways to begin the recruitment process.

- **Approach the local Childcare Resource and Referral agency.** Request a list of licensed childcare providers, connect to childcare meetings, leverage existing trainings, and learn more about childcare in your community.
- **Utilize partners who work with childcare providers to streamline recruitment.** Request time to present on the breastfeeding-friendly program at childcare or partner meetings.
- **Create a flyer advertising the program.** Distribute in areas frequented by childcare providers, as well as virtually through email blasts and social media.

ENROLL

Collecting initial information helps inform the best way to communicate and follow up with childcare providers.

- **Use an enrollment form to capture important information.** Request childcare providers' emails, phone numbers, preferred methods of communication, and best times to communicate.
- **Consider the best method for childcare providers to enroll in the program.** Offer program options such as in-person, online, or over the phone to ensure everyone has access.
- **Ensure prompt follow-up.** This will keep childcare providers engaged.

ASSESS

Many childcare providers are implementing breastfeeding-friendly practices. Determine the information and support they need.

- **Create an assessment form.** Utilize the '[Building Blocks to Breastfeeding Friendly](#)' checklist. Use this form to detail what childcare providers are doing to support breastfeeding and determine the additional support they need.
- **Conduct the initial assessment in-person.** If possible, visit the childcare provider and complete the initial assessment together.

IMPLEMENT

Implementation of a breastfeeding-friendly childcare program will vary based on the needs of each community. Consider ways to make the program easy to adopt.

- **Provide resources, tools, and technical assistance.** Help childcare providers implement breastfeeding-friendly practices by giving them everything they need. Consider the best methods of communication and utilize them.
- **Consider childcare providers with limited access to technology.** Consider utilizing print resources and communicating in-person or over the phone.
- **Consider childcare providers with access to technology.** Consider communicating through emails or texts. Offer online trainings and electronic resources.

RECOGNIZE

Recognition for participating in the breastfeeding-friendly childcare program can serve as a quality indicator for childcare providers.

- **Provide recognition for childcare providers.** Consider ways to highlight and promote childcare providers that implement breastfeeding-friendly practices.
- **Recognize exceptional childcare providers.** Consider ways to recognize childcare providers that exceed the minimum requirements.

"I am investing in children under my care because they are going to be those children playing in the playgrounds, going to the schools, being in teen groups, and young workers. I am investing in my community."

– Childcare Provider, San Diego, CA

Building Blocks to Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare

Supporting childcare providers in becoming breastfeeding-friendly takes a little planning and commitment. The five steps contained in this section make up the 'Building Blocks to Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare' guide. This step-by-step guide directs organizations through the process of implementing a breastfeeding-friendly program. Each section includes links to resources and tools at the top of the page.

- 1 Create a breastfeeding-friendly environment.**
- 2 Provide employee training to support breastfeeding.**
- 3 Implement proper storage, handling, and feeding of breast milk.**
- 4 Adopt written policy/procedures that support breastfeeding families and employees.**
- 5 Offer breastfeeding resources for families and employees.**





Environment

Create a Breastfeeding-Friendly Environment

Breastfeeding families are encouraged to breastfeed onsite.

Many families may be hesitant to ask if they are able to breastfeed onsite. Encourage childcare providers to make breastfeeding families feel welcome.

- **Communicate that breastfeeding onsite is encouraged.** When families tour the facility, childcare providers can state that onsite breastfeeding is welcome.
- **Offer multiple opportunities for families to breastfeed.** Childcare providers can promote breastfeeding at drop-off, pick-up, or even during work breaks.

Families and employees are provided a non-restroom space to breastfeed.

Providing families with a defined space for breastfeeding helps demonstrate support. Assist childcare providers in identifying an appropriate place for families and employees to breastfeed. Ensure the space is not in the restroom.

- **Families will appreciate a comfortable and quiet place to breastfeed.** A comfortable chair or couch with some privacy is ideal, especially for babies who are distracted easily. Ask families where they are most comfortable breastfeeding.
- **An effective space for breastfeeding does not have to be permanent.** If space is limited, consider purchasing a mobile privacy screen or asking families if they are comfortable breastfeeding in an open space.
- **When accommodating staff, remember:** [Federal](#) and [state laws](#) require that employees receive break time and a private space—that is not a restroom—to pump or breastfeed. For more information on accommodating employees, visit '[Working and Breastfeeding](#)'.

CREATING A BREASTFEEDING SPACE FOR FAMILIES

- **Keep it simple.** Offer a comfortable place to sit. Check in to see if they are content with the space. Consider ways to offer some privacy, if requested.
- **Get families involved.** Ask families to get their baby ready and to set up any preferred privacy tools (e.g., mobile screens).
- **Go the extra mile.** Make parents feel valued by providing a side table for a glass of water or by displaying breastfeeding resources or pictures.

BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY PRACTICES AS A MARKETING TOOL

Once a childcare provider has implemented breastfeeding-friendly practices, the recognition can be a valuable marketing tool. While families have many priorities when selecting childcare, offering explicit support for breastfeeding can help a provider demonstrate their high quality of care. Childcare providers can consider advertising their 'Breastfeeding-Friendly' status on their website, social media pages, family handbooks, or with affiliated organizations.

2 Training

Provide Employee Training to Support Breastfeeding

Train all employees on breastfeeding-friendly practices.

Ensuring all staff are able to properly support and care for breastfed babies is a vital component for implementing and sustaining a breastfeeding-friendly childcare program. All staff, even those in administration roles, should receive breastfeeding-friendly training in order to create an environment of support and reinforce the normalization of breastfeeding.

Trainings can be offered in-person or via online training videos. The BFSF program developed four training videos, available in English and Spanish, which cover the essential information for implementing breastfeeding-friendly practices.

Hosting an in-person training for childcare providers is also a great option. In-person trainings provide an opportunity to answer questions, dispel myths, and provide additional technical assistance, all valuable components of the learning process. Invite community partners, such as local Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) offices or breastfeeding coalitions, to collaborate by providing their lactation expertise or resources for the training. Engage the local Childcare Resource and Referral agency to promote and host trainings.

Whether in-person or online, trainings are a great way to recruit childcare providers to participate in the program.

Trainings include: benefits of breastfeeding, handling and storing breast milk, creating a breastfeeding-supportive environment, policy and procedure development and implementation, and parent engagement and support.

Ensure the training(s) provided to childcare providers meet the following learning objectives:

- Know the benefits of supporting breastfeeding families and babies. Understand the value of being a breastfeeding-friendly childcare provider.
- Appreciate the differences between the composition of breast milk and formula.
- Learn how to safely store and prepare expressed breast milk.
- Explain the uniqueness of feeding patterns and strategies to bottle-feed the breastfed baby.
- Discuss strategies and ideas to create a space to breastfeed or pump.
- Learn about the resources available to support breastfeeding families.

Hosting In-Person Trainings

Consider the following when hosting an in-person training:

LANGUAGE:

When implementing a breastfeeding-friendly childcare program in an area where multiple languages are spoken, utilize a bilingual presenter or offer translation services when possible.

RESPECT:

Acknowledge breastfeeding norms, cultural considerations, and personal experiences of participants. Create a safe space by listening and acknowledging their comments. Respond with evidence-based information.

LOCATION:

Select a comfortable space that has plenty of transportation and/or parking options. Consider selecting a space already familiar to childcare providers. Work with partners who host childcare provider meetings to determine a location. When working with childcare centers, offer to provide the training onsite.

TIME:

Select a time convenient for most attendees. Since many childcare providers hold services during the day, consider an evening or weekend training. Allow enough time for discussion and questions. BFSB requested two hours for trainings.

INCENTIVES:

If the organization has the capacity, offer refreshments, a door raffle, certificate, or another form of incentive for attendance.

CHILDCARE:

If possible, offer free childcare during the training. This will break down attendance barriers for childcare providers who are also parents.

FOLLOW-UP:

Have attendees 'sign in' and mark whether they are interested in further follow-up. If your organization is offering technical assistance, offer enrollment forms at the training.

"The training provided was extremely helpful and I feel my staff have a better understanding of how to support breastfeeding mothers. We've incorporated breastfeeding into our feeding plans and let all families know they are welcome to breastfeed onsite. We are always looking for ways to support child development and supporting breastfeeding is another way we can do just that!"

– Childcare Center Manager, Escondido, CA



Storage & Handling

Implement Proper Storage, Handling, and Feeding of Breast Milk

During training, childcare providers learn the basics of how to properly store, handle, and feed breast milk. Assist childcare providers in creating a plan to put their knowledge into action.

Provide refrigeration and freezer space for storage of breast milk.

Ensure childcare providers implement proper storage.

- **Determine a space to store breast milk.** Breast milk can be stored in refrigerators and freezers appropriate for food storage along with any other foods and beverages.
- **Organize the storage space.** Designate a space in the refrigerator where families can leave their breast milk.

Breastfeeding families are instructed on how to properly label and store breast milk.

To guarantee proper handling, encourage childcare providers to ensure a safe storage environment and ask families to label milk properly.

- **Discuss proper labeling of breast milk with families.** Ask families to label bottles or bags of breast milk with the infant's name, date, and time the milk was expressed.
- **Follow storage guidelines.** Childcare providers are encouraged to utilize conservative storage guidelines, such as those from the [Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\)](#). See *Table 2* for the recommended storage guidelines per CACFP, as of 2018. In addition, encourage childcare providers to check with local licensing agencies or other affiliated programs, as they may also have storage guidelines.

Table 2: CACFP Storage Guidelines

	Temperature	Guidelines
Refrigerator	39°F (3.9°C) or below	Freshly expressed breast milk may be refrigerated for up to 72 hours. Return unused refrigerated breast milk to family after 72 hours.
Freezer	0°F or below	Frozen breast milk should be provided in single-use plastic bags. Frozen breast milk may be stored for up to three months. Once thawed, use within 24 hours.

An individual feeding plan exists for every infant under 18 months.

Infant feeding plans are an important communication and planning tool. Feeding plans guarantee that the childcare provider is following the families' preferred feeding style.

- **Record feeding patterns.** Keep records of the time and amount baby drinks. Share the feeding patterns with families.
- **Update feeding plans.** Feeding plans should be updated every three months or as feeding patterns change, such as with the introduction of solids.
- **Utilize a standard form.** Utilize an infant feeding plan form such as the [BFSD Infant Feeding Plan](#).

BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY FEEDING STRATEGIES

- **Color code bottles.** Consider marking each infant's bottle with a different piece of colored tape. That way, a baby's bottle is quickly identified.
- **Post infant feeding plans.** Post the infant feeding plans close to the kitchen, making paperwork an easy process after feeding.
- **Make rotating bottles easy.** Use small plastic containers in the refrigerator to separate each baby's bottles.

4 Policies

Adopt Written Policies that Support Breastfeeding Families and Employees

A written policy supporting breastfeeding families and employees exists and is communicated.

Creating a policy allows childcare providers to demonstrate their support for breastfeeding families and employees. Creating a policy may sound intimidating; however, breastfeeding-friendly language can be short and simple. Childcare providers can adopt breastfeeding-friendly language written as a procedure, added into family contracts, or included in family/employee handbooks.

- **Describe how breastfeeding is supported.** Include information about breastfeeding onsite, employee training, and handling, storing, and feeding practices. For larger childcare centers, work with the Human Resources department to develop a lactation accommodation policy for staff.
- **Communicate written policy and procedures to all staff and families.** Communicate the policy and procedures in-person, over the phone, via email, or through the inclusion of the policy in the family or employee handbook.
- **Provide sample policy language.** Provide the sample breastfeeding-friendly [policy](#) for families and staff to childcare providers. Childcare providers can adopt the policy as is, or modify as needed.

Breastfeeding employees are given appropriate break time to pump or breastfeed.

Childcare providers should extend the same breastfeeding-friendly supports to employees.

- **Discuss individual needs.** Connect with employees on their breastfeeding and pumping plans before and after their return to work.
- **Consider break time and pumping schedules.** Ensure that employees have proper coverage for their duties, and enough time to pump.

ACCOMMODATING BREASTFEEDING EMPLOYEES

- **Provide a space to breastfeed or pump.** Federal and state laws require that the space is not a restroom. The space does not have to be permanent, but does need to be private. Work with the employee to find a convenient and comfortable location.
- **Provide adequate break time.** Discuss break time and the employee's needs for breastfeeding or pumping. Work with their schedule, and ensure that the employee has proper coverage for their duties, if applicable.
- **Cultivate a culture of support.** Ensure employees feel comfortable and supported. Work with Human Resources to ensure that all employees know their rights and feel safe exercising them at work. Discuss support before, during, and after their family leave. This can increase employee retention, loyalty, and productivity.

5 Resources

Offer Breastfeeding Resources for Families and Employees

Breastfeeding resources are available for families.

Often families will go to their childcare provider for advice or information. This is also true for breastfeeding.

Offer childcare providers several types of breastfeeding resources or referrals to provide to families. Remember: for a childcare provider to be breastfeeding-friendly, they do not need to be a breastfeeding expert. Providing resources to families is a great way to offer support.

Review the resources for [breastfeeding families and employees](#). Request print materials and additional resources through the local breastfeeding coalition, WIC office, healthcare providers, or health department. Encourage childcare providers to offer resources or referrals on the following topics:

- Pumping
- Going Back to Work or School and Breastfeeding
- Mental Health Services
- Feeding the Breastfed Baby
- Employment Rights of Parents

Breastfeeding resources are available for employees.

Instruct childcare providers to offer the same resources families receive, and provide some tailored towards the workplace. Direct employees to information specifically focused on parents' legal rights around family leave time or lactation accommodation. [Legal Aid at Work](#) is a great website to ensure employees are being supported in the best way.

OFFERING RESOURCES

- **Make family resources available.** Ask childcare providers to communicate to families the availability of breastfeeding resources. If referrals are provided, let families know.
- **Make resources accessible.** Offer resources in several languages. If space permits, display resources near a family board or area. Families can take resources at their leisure.
- **Provide resources with family packets.** Include breastfeeding resources with contracts or enrollment packets.

PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY

It is important to remember that not all childcare providers have access to or are comfortable with online or electronic resources. Ask providers about their preferred methods of communication. If they prefer electronic materials, note if they have access to platforms such as Microsoft Office or Adobe Reader. BFSDF found that many childcare providers preferred print resources or materials shared in Google Drive.

Recognition

Recognizing childcare providers as breastfeeding-friendly serves a dual purpose. It delivers much deserved attention to exceptional childcare providers, while elevating the message of the breastfeeding-friendly program to community members, organizations, and families.

Setting up a recognition program

Consider the best way to recognize childcare providers and sustain a breastfeeding-friendly recognition program.

- **Recognize breastfeeding-friendly childcare providers in a public way.** This can be via website, social media, newsletter, or blog. Create partnerships with organizations that serve families with young infants and utilize their platforms.
- **Collaborate with organizations to oversee a recognition program.** Examples may include the local breastfeeding coalition, Childcare Resource and Referral agency, or local health department. This improves the sustainability of the program.
- **Decide whom the recognition should come from.** Consider well-known, reputable organizations in the community. Make sure the recognition is meaningful to both childcare providers and families.

Recognizing childcare providers

Once childcare providers have completed all the building blocks, they are ready for recognition.

- **Emphasize the recognition.** Congratulate and thank childcare providers. Explain the promotion of the program and the benefits of being a recognized partner.
- **Recognize childcare providers.** Schedule a time to meet with the childcare provider individually or recognize multiple childcare providers during standing meetings. Distribute a 'Recognition Packet'. Recognition Packets can include items such as:
 - [Recognized Partner Certificate](#)
 - [Recognition Window Cling](#)
 - [Letter of Accomplishment](#)

USING PARTNERSHIPS FOR RECOGNITION

Utilizing partnerships is a great way to create substantial recognitions.

- **Post recognition on partner websites.** Any partner that works with families or early childcare settings would be a great fit.
- **Request printing resources.** Partners that have access to free or low-cost printing may be able to create the recognition certificates or letters.
- **Advertise the program.** Use the social networks of partner organizations to advertise your breastfeeding-friendly program and the recognized partners.

Family awareness

Making families aware that breastfeeding-friendly childcare is an option is an important step to breaking down barriers to breastfeeding.

- **Communicate that breastfeeding-friendly childcare is an option.** Engage community partners to connect to families about the availability of breastfeeding-friendly childcare.
- **Refer families to breastfeeding-friendly childcare providers.** Create a directory of breastfeeding-friendly childcare providers. Provide the directory online where families can explore breastfeeding-friendly childcare providers near them or work with partners to distribute a list to families.
- **Publicize breastfeeding-friendly status.** Encourage individual childcare providers to advertise as breastfeeding-friendly.

Elevating the Work

DISCOVER ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING FAMILIES.

Encourage childcare providers to champion breastfeeding-friendly practices

- **Encourage childcare providers to advertise and take pride in breastfeeding-friendly practices.** Openly discussing a childcare provider's support for breastfeeding is an easy way to normalize and advocate for the practice and for breastfeeding families.
- **Encourage childcare providers to use their social networks to further breastfeeding-friendly practices.** Ask childcare providers if they know others that might be interested in the program. Encourage childcare providers to offer advice and share best practices.
- **Encourage childcare providers to get involved with a breastfeeding coalition.** Childcare providers have unique and important perspectives for the breastfeeding world. Find a local or state coalition through the [United States Breastfeeding Committee](#).

Make changes within your organization

- **Walk the talk.** Support the adoption of breastfeeding-friendly practices and policies within your organization or workplace.
- **Consider involvement with a local breastfeeding coalition.** There are a multitude of ways to be involved with coalitions, from signing up for email newsletters to becoming a member. Find a local or state coalition through the [United States Breastfeeding Committee](#).
- **Educate community decision-makers.** Decision-makers may not be aware of the tangible steps they can take to support breastfeeding. Breastfeeding advocates can help in a variety of ways, from explaining the benefits of designated lactation spaces to detailing the benefits of paid family leave.
- **Encourage other organizations to adopt and implement breastfeeding-friendly practices.** Share successes and offer advice and encouragement.