

WORKPLACE LACTATION PROGRAMS

Good for Working Families. Good for Business.™

Benefits to Business



How Lactation Programs Benefit Employers

When employees breastfeed their babies, employers can see significant savings and increased productivity because of:

DECREASED EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM

- Healthier babies can mean fewer missed workdays for parents.

One survey tracked working mothers who missed 1 day of work because their babies were sick with 1 of 40 common illnesses. Only 25% of those illnesses occurred in exclusively breastfed infants, while 75% occurred in all other infants included in the survey. Exclusively breastfed infants get sick less, which means less absenteeism.

REDUCED HEALTH CARE COSTS

- Healthier babies can mean lower health care costs for employers.

The additional cost of prescriptions and medical services in the first year of life for infants who were never breastfed is estimated at more than \$400 per infant. After instituting a workplace lactation program, one large corporation saw a 62% drop in prescriptions for infants of employees.

INCREASED EMPLOYEE LOYALTY AND PRODUCTIVITY

- Healthier babies can mean happier employees.

Conflict between paid work and family responsibilities is linked to decreased productivity in employees. Family-friendly policies, including workplace lactation programs, can reduce turnover and increase productivity.

In a recent Working Mother survey, 91% of the “100 Best Companies for Working Women” offered a workplace lactation program, compared to 23% of all companies nationwide.

HEALTHY FAMILIES ARE GOOD FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Mothers with infants are one of the largest and fastest growing segments in the United States workforce, particularly in retail, service, and other lower-wage industries.

- 56% of mothers with infants under 1 year of age work.¹ One-third of mothers return to work within 3 months of giving birth, two-thirds within 6 months.²

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all mothers breastfeed their babies exclusively for 6 months and keep nursing for 1 year or more.

- 75% of mothers in the United States begin breastfeeding their babies at birth.³
- Less than 20% still are exclusively breastfeeding 6 months later.³
- One of the most common reasons mothers cite for early weaning is that they must return to work.⁴

1 U.S. Dept of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. Employment characteristics of families in 2007. Available at: www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/famee.pdf. Accessed December 1, 2008.

2 US Census Bureau. Maternity leave and employment patterns of first-time mothers: 1961–2003. Available at: www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p70-113.pdf. Accessed December 1, 2008.

3 Dept of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Breastfeeding among US children born 1999–2005, CDC National Immunization Survey. Available at: www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/data/NIS_data. Accessed December 1, 2008.

4 Roe B, Whittington LA, Fein SB, Teisi MF. Is there competition between breast-feeding and maternal employment. *Demography*. 1999;36:157–171.

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Program Summary

Supporting your hourly and lower-wage employees who want to continue breastfeeding their babies after they return to work makes good business sense. The *Workplace Lactation Programs* toolkit provides everything you need to design a program to meet the needs of all your employees:

- *Employer Guide* to supporting employees with breastfed babies, including business benefits and practical steps to start your program.
- Paycheck stuffer to alert employees to the resources provided by the program.
- Poster to display in employee lounges or other public spaces to promote the program.
- Flyers to distribute to employees to educate them about the program.

These materials also are available on a CD, so that you can e-mail them to employees, insert the materials in newsletters, or reproduce them on a standard color printer for distribution with paychecks or posting on bulletin boards.

Six Steps to Build Your Workplace Lactation Program

1. ASSESS YOUR EMPLOYEES' NEEDS AND YOUR WORKPLACE CULTURE

- What's the average age of your employees, and what percentage are women? How many are mothers with infants or are likely to become mothers?
- Do you provide paid maternity leave? What is the average length of maternity leave for your employees?
- Does the culture in your workplace allow breastfeeding mothers to feel comfortable continuing to breastfeed?
- Does your workplace culture support job flexibility?
- Are your employees able to discuss flexibility issues and their needs as breastfeeding mothers with their supervisors and coworkers, so that you can adjust schedules and manage breaks accordingly?
- Are your supervisors and managers willing to have flexibility discussions with breastfeeding mothers? Note: Lack of support and acceptance from management is cited by hourly workers as the most common reason why companies don't offer workplace lactation programs.

2. ASSESS YOUR WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

- Does it provide physical space (rooms suitable for pumping breast milk) that meet the privacy and efficiency needs of all breastfeeding employees? Note: Lack of access to lactation rooms is cited by hourly workers as the most common reason why employees don't use a lactation program benefit, even when offered.

3. REVIEW OBSTACLES IN THE WORKPLACE

- Are opportunities for flexible schedules and sufficient break times available for employees? Note: An employer survey documented that scheduling and shift conflicts are one of the biggest barriers for implementation of workplace lactation support benefits for hourly workers.
- Are convenient, private, and sanitary locations provided in which employees can pump and store milk?
- Do your employees understand how to breastfeed, pump, and store their milk?
- Do your employees feel comfortable requesting schedules and locations in which to pump and store milk?

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"Breastfeeding women who have access to broader breastfeeding programs that include access to lactation consultants, discounted pumps, and educational support not only choose breastfeeding more often, but they breastfeed longer (and hence have the ability to reap the health savings for an organization). In fact, 66% of members enrolled in our lactation program are still breastfeeding at 6 months compared to 41.9% nationally. And 65% of our members had two or fewer sick-baby doctor visits, whereas the national norm is 3.6 sick-baby doctor visits."

—Marianne C. Stook
Managing Director, LifeCare, Inc.

"I've found the environment at my company very welcoming. The informal flexibility and acceptance—actually encouragement—to take my mom responsibilities seriously have been tremendous."

—Heathermarie Tudor
Business Compensation Analyst, PNC

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4. DESIGN SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES

- Ask employees enrolled in the lactation program to work together with their teams and with each other to develop a schedule of breaks that meets their pumping needs. (Each employee will need 15 to 20 minutes of break time every 2 to 4 hours.) Allowing employees to develop and control the schedule enables them to adjust it as their infants' nutritional needs evolve, in addition to supporting leadership skill development and giving them responsibility for positive results.
- Ask supervisors and managers to support employees in the scheduling process. Hourly and lower-wage employees usually are unaccustomed to developing their own schedules, and will need supervisors' and managers' encouragement to do so. Research confirms that giving control of the schedules to employees is not only a practical solution, but actually benefits overall productivity and morale. To establish a successful flexible schedule in lower-wage environments try these innovations:
 - Employees agree to shorten daily lunch hours by 15 to 45 minutes, using those minutes as needed throughout the week.
 - An employee becomes a “floater,” assigned to covering employees on breaks as needed.
 - Employees agree to work an additional hour each week for every three 20-minute breaks.
- Provide a central information base for employees to communicate with each other about lactation schedules, resources, and education. A notebook labeled *Lactation Program* can serve this purpose.
- Provide a private and sanitary location in which employees can pump and store breast milk. Many businesses have successfully converted supply closets and storage areas. In the retail setting, dressing rooms often are used, or sometimes nearby businesses share a location.
- Provide educational materials and referrals on lactation. The *Workplace Lactation Programs* toolkit contains ideas and resources for you.



5. PUBLICIZE THE PROGRAM TO ALL EMPLOYEES

- Inform employees at all levels, parents and nonparents, of the benefits of successful workplace lactation programs, both to enroll employees and to build support among all employees and managers for the program. Note: Lack of awareness about workplace lactation programs is cited by hourly workers as one of the most common reasons they did not use the benefit.

6. MONITOR AND REVIEW THE PROGRAM

- Ask for feedback from breastfeeding employees to ensure that the program is meeting their needs and to determine how to improve it.