

Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Self-Assessment:

Instruction Sheet

This instruction sheet is to guide you in completing the “Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Self-Assessment”, and includes some explanation of the questions and a list of definitions of terms.

General Instructions: This self-assessment is not used to evaluate your child care center’s practices, but as a training tool to help your center improve its breastfeeding support. By answering the questions as honestly as possible, you can focus your energy toward areas that need the most improvement. If you are not sure about the answer to a certain question, ask another staff member who would know.

The steps below might be different than the steps we talked about in the training you came to. We have revised them so that they are easier to understand and follow!

Step 1: Make a commitment to the importance of breastfeeding and share with staff.

- A written policy for breastfeeding support should be part of the center’s policy manual.
- Educational handouts or other materials should not be provided by commercial businesses. This could include manufacturers of infant formula.

Step 2: Train staff in healthy feeding for infants and children.

- Ideal infant feeding consists of exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, with breastfeeding continuing for at least the first year of life, and the gradual introduction of foods starting at six months of age.
- Training may be formal (a class or training session) or informal (on-the-job at the center), but should cover all needed areas.

Step 3: Talk to families about the importance of breastfeeding.

- Materials should be regularly given out to families.
- Appropriate handouts should be culturally sensitive and at a reading level geared toward the families you serve.

Step 4: Provide children’s activities which make breastfeeding seem normal.

- Books do not need to specifically focus on breastfeeding, but could include images of nursing animals and/or babies.

Step 5: Make sure that all milk is properly stored and labeled.

- Storage guidelines for clients should be based on current regulations and recommendations.
- Note that storage guidelines for home and for the child care center are not the same.

Step 6: Provide a breastfeeding-friendly environment

- The comfortable place for nursing babies does not need to be private; it may be a chair in the infant room or other appropriate location.
- Ideally, mothers should be welcome to nurse their babies anywhere in the center.
- Posters should include photos that reflect the race/ethnicity of the families you serve, and will have a reading level understandable by your clients.
- Posters should be prominently displayed, preferably in multiple locations.

Step 7: Support breastfeeding employees.

- Breastfeeding employees who need to pump should have access to a private location where they can pump.
- Ideally, breastfeeding employees will be able to have their babies with them at the center, and nurse them as needed.

Step 8: Develop a feeding plan with each family.

- “Nursing on demand” means feeding the baby when he/she is hungry, in response to his/her cues. The alternative would be feeding the baby on a schedule, following the clock.
- The recommended age for introduction of solid food is six months of age.

Step 9: Know where to go for breastfeeding support.

- The statement “Community breastfeeding resources” refers to breastfeeding support groups, lactation consultants, hospital-based programs, classes, and other resources for breastfeeding mothers.
- These resources may be staffed by health care providers or trained volunteers.

Step 10: Continue learning about breastfeeding support.

- Continuing education may take place at the center or elsewhere, but it should go beyond the usual on-the-job training.