

GUIDE TO HOSTING A

BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY EVENT



ROCHESTER REGION
Breastfeeding Coalition

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The Rochester Region Breastfeeding Coalition (RRBC) is a non-profit organization that promotes breastfeeding and provides resources and opportunities for connections for parents, families, healthcare providers, and employers in the Rochester Region. A diverse group of lactation-related professionals, academics, and families they serve, the RRBC sets forth its mission to improve the health of the Greater Rochester Region by promoting breastfeeding as the optimal feeding choice for infants through education, advocacy, collaboration, and increasing access to support.

For more information on RRBC, visit
<https://rochesterregionalbreastfeedingcoalition.com/>

Using This Guide

This document provides guidelines and practical advice for event organizers to support a lactating mother's ability to provide for her child at a public or private event. While this guide iterates policies specific to New York State, the Rochester Region Breastfeeding Coalition welcomes the opportunity to provide information regarding the provision of lactation support to all interested practitioners.

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WHY IS BREASTFEEDING IMPORTANT?

Breastfeeding Protects Parents and Babies

Breastfeeding is a public health priority as it is vitally important for the health of parents and their babies. Breastfeeding's numerous benefits come from the rich nutrients found in breast milk that promote infant growth and protection against infections and illnesses.



Breastfed babies have lower risks of:

- Asthma
- Obesity
- Type 1 diabetes
- Ear and respiratory infections
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)
- Gastrointestinal infections (diarrhea/vomiting)
- Necrotizing enterocolitis (NEC), a disease that affects the gastrointestinal tract in preterm infants

In mothers, breastfeeding is linked to a reduced risk of breast cancer, ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and postpartum depression.

Call to Action

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended for the first 6 months of life, with continued breastfeeding up to one year or longer along with the introduction of complementary foods. However, disparities persist in the initiation and duration of breastfeeding in the US, especially among parents from lower-income backgrounds, those with fewer years of education, those with public insurance, and those who identify as a racial or ethnic minority.

Most parents desire and intend to breastfeed but stop early due to a lack of support. In 2011, U.S. Surgeon General released *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding*, laying out clear action steps that communities, employers, public health professionals, and other organizations and individuals can take to support breastfeeding mothers and increase breastfeeding rates in the United States.

Considering the importance of breastfeeding for the health of parents and babies, as a community, we play a critical role in providing parents the support and encouragement they need to breastfeed.

WHY IS PROVIDING ADEQUATE LACTATION SPACES AT EVENTS IMPORTANT?

Barriers to Breastfeeding

Key barriers to breastfeeding include embarrassment and lack of accommodation to breastfeed or express milk. Due to the ongoing stigma surrounding breastfeeding in public, nursing parents often fear criticism and exclusion. As a result, parents may feel compelled to conceal breastfeeding and face challenges in finding comfortable and accessible breastfeeding facilities in a public place. For many parents, this feeling of embarrassment can discourage them from breastfeeding altogether or have them opt for supplementary formula.



Helping Parents Achieve their Breastfeeding Goals

A lactating parent has a physical need to take time out of their day to feed their baby directly or to express their milk. Providing lactation support is a matter of gender equity, helping parents better accommodate the demands of everyday life while continuing to provide for their infant. Most parents experience a difficult time expressing milk during times of stress. Breastfeeding comes more naturally when a parent feels emotionally safe and physically comfortable. Hence, a supportive culture, as well as accessibility to a clean, private location for milk expression at public events can empower parents to nurse their babies with confidence.

COVID-19 Considerations

When organizing events during the COVID-19 pandemic, please reach out to your local health department and follow the guidance in your state.

Breastfeeding is for any time, any place!

Some parents can feel uncomfortable breastfeeding in public so, having awareness of federal and state laws can empower them to feed their babies with confidence. In all 50 states, parents have the right to breastfeed in public wherever and whenever their baby is hungry.

New York State (NYS) is one of the most breastfeeding-positive states with laws to protect and support breastfeeding. You can see the laws in your state at the National Conference of State Legislatures website at www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx.



Federal Laws

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (2010)
With the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) was amended to require employers to provide lactation rooms in workspaces and reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for their nursing child.

Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act (2019)
In 2019, Congress passed Fairness for Breastfeeding Mothers Act of 2019, which requires certain public buildings to provide a shielded, hygienic lactation room other than a bathroom, that contains a chair, working surface and an electrical outlet for use by members of the public to express milk.

New York State Laws

NYS Civil Rights Law § 79-E (1994): Right to breastfeed

NYS Civil Rights law provides parents the right to breastfeed their baby in any location, public or private, where the parent is otherwise allowed to be, whether or not the nipple of the breast is covered during breastfeeding.

NYS Public Buildings Law (2019)

The public buildings law dictates that a public building owned by the state of New York must contain a lactation room that is made available for use by a member of the public to breastfeed or express breast milk.

To file a civil rights complaint through the Office of the Attorney General: [Civil Rights Complaints](#).

SPACE REQUIREMENTS

Parents can breastfeed anywhere they want to! The following recommendations outline the minimal requirements for a lactation space should they choose to use a private space as well as additional accommodations that are appreciated but not critical to allowing lactating mothers to attend events.

The minimum accommodations that allow mothers of young children to express milk include:

- **Individual privacy.** The room should be an accessible and private space to sit and express milk or breastfeed that is free from intrusion.
 - **Limited rooms?** Arrange a scheduling and reservation system that can be easily accessed by event-goers. This can be moderated by an electronic calendar, sign-up sheet, or dry-erase board.
 - **Multi-user room?** If the lactation space is communal, provide screens or partitions to section off private areas. The room dividers can be curtains, movable privacy screens, or even foam and/or cardboard separators.
 - **Outdoor event?** If private indoor rooms are not available, accommodation of portable rooms should be provided. Rent a pop-up tent or a private lactation space. Contact **RBBC** to borrow our popup booth, floor mat, and weights... so it doesn't blow away! Requests must be placed at least three weeks in advance.
- **Make sure the space is well marked.** Have good signage leading to the lactation space and provide an "Occupied" sign for the door. You can find one on page 6.
- **Ensure the lactation space is convenient to the event and activities.** Lactation rooms are distinct spaces for their intended purpose and should not be in or accessed through bathrooms, locker rooms, or similar facilities. They may be located near lobbies or main corridors and should be in proximity to the main event.
- **The space should be easy to access with little to no help.** It should not require an escort or special access. If locked, the key must be readily available.
- **Equip each single user room with a lockable door that is accessible by emergency personnel.** Additionally, the sitting area should not be visible, including when the door to the room is open.
- **Provide comfortable arrangements.** There should be comfortable seating, preferably a chair with adjustable height and armrest along with a countertop or table(s) for supplies. There should be adequate lighting and ventilation within the room.
- **Provide cleaning supplies.** Have a wastebasket, paper towels, sanitizing wipes for surfaces and hands, and disposable gloves for cleanup available for use.
- **If possible, have nearby running water and soap for handwashing and cleaning.** It would be preferable for the handwashing area to be within the actual lactation room.
- **Provide general instructions for how to use the space along with users' responsibility and contacts if there are any issues.** Arrange assigned coordinators in advance to help with access and oversight.
- **Lactation space should be open at least one hour before and after all official events.** This allows mothers to flexibly plan their breastfeeding and pumping schedules.

Along with basic accommodation, additional supportive features can be considered:

- **Power outlets.** Power outlets are needed for pumping moms who need at least one outlet for plugging in a breast pump.
- **Refrigerated space.** A compact refrigerator with a freezer compartment to store cold packs, milk, and/or pumping bottles. Many parents refrigerate the bottles to avoid needing to wash and sterilize parts after each use.
- **Lockable storage** for personal belongings and individual pumps, if necessary.
- **Clock and mirror** to help check and readjust clothing.
- **Multi-user (also called hospital-grade) breast pump.** Multi-user breast pumps are common in hospital settings and workplaces for shared use and can be rented for an event. Alternatively, consider asking pump manufacturers to sponsor your event and provide pumps for use.
- **Educational resources.** This can be a bulletin board, pamphlets, or books! Resources should include inclusive language. Considering including information on domestic violence as well.
- **Relaxing décor.** Consider incorporating soft colors, patterns, and textures that help with relaxation and wall covering and fabrics that are stain-resistant and easy to clean.



Special Considerations for Event Planning

While planning an event, other logistics must be considered to ensure that the event runs smoothly and the information regarding lactation support is made clear to all attendees.

- At the time of registration, consider asking attendees if they anticipate using lactation support services. This can be done by presenting a single checkbox and sending follow-up information about the support available at the event. By doing so, event organizers can estimate the number of attendees that will use the lactation spaces and determine how many lactation spaces will be needed. To account for timing, it is reasonable to assume each woman would use a lactation room for 20-30 minutes every 3-4 hours.
- Properly advertise the list of accommodations and lactation support that will be offered at the event with the general even information. Make sure to include inclusive language on all materials provided. This will assure parents that they can attend without compromising their family priorities, resulting in increased attendance and comfort among breastfeeding parents.
- Include signage with statements like “breastfeeding welcome here” to encourage parents to breastfeed in public if that is what they prefer. On the event map, make sure to mark the location of the lactation rooms as well. Additionally, having signage that pumping is also welcome can further support parents who prefer to do so.
- If applicable and possible, consider providing remote viewing options of the event that can be streamed in the lactation spaces or in a separate room. This would allow parents to stay with fussy infants and breastfeed without disturbing other attendees.
- Event coordinators must ensure that the room is cleaned on a regular basis, all cleaning supplies are present at all times, and keep track of the reservation system in place, if applicable. They must also be aware of all the lactation support offered at the event and how to appropriately account for any issues.
- It is critical that event coordinators and staff display a welcoming attitude towards breastfeeding parents. Parents often fear negative reactions from others in regard to expressing milk for their babies. A breastfeeding-friendly environment with encouraging staff can mitigate that and help parents achieve their breastfeeding goals.



USING THE RRBC POPUP LACTATION TENT

To use the RRBC popup lactation tent, please contact rrbreastfeedingcoalition@gmail.com at least 3 weeks in advance

This includes:

- Pop-up tent
- Floor mats
- Weights (to ensure the tent does not blow away)

Event organizers will have to arrange the following:

- Someone monitoring privacy for the breastfeeder
- "Occupied" sign for the door
- Good lighting and ventilation
- Comfortable chair, preferably adjustable height and armrest, but not essential
- Countertop or small table(s) for supplies
- Wastebasket and cleaning supplies (i.e., paper towels, sanitizing wipes for surfaces and hands, and disposable gloves for cleanup available for use)
- General instructions for how to use the space along with users' responsibility and contacts if there are any issues



LACTATION ROOM CHECKLIST

Basic single user lactation room (recommended dimensions: 4' by 5')

At minimum:

- Door that locks (or someone monitoring privacy for the breastfeeder)
- "Occupied" sign for the door
- Good lighting and ventilation
- Comfortable chair, preferably adjustable height and armrest, but not essential
- Countertop or small table(s) for supplies
- Wastebasket and cleaning supplies (i.e., paper towels, sanitizing wipes for surfaces and hands, and disposable gloves for cleanup available for use)
- General instructions for how to use the space along with users' responsibility and contacts if there are any issues

Recommended single user lactation room (recommended dimensions: 6' x 8' or 7' x 7')

All the requirements of the Basic Lactation Room (see above) plus:

- Electrical outlet for plugging in a breast pump
- Nearby refrigerator to store milk and cold packs
- Footrest
- Nearby sink for washing hands, pump, and tubing, with soap and paper towels
- Compact refrigerator with freezer compartment to store cold packs and milk
- Reservation system (electronic calendar, sign-in sheet, or dry-erase board)
- Educational resources
- Relaxing decor

Also, possibly:

- Lockable storage for personal belongings
- Multi-user (also called hospital-grade) breast pump
- Clock, and small mirror to help check and readjust clothing before returning to work
- Educational resources (i.e., brochures, pamphlets, books)
- Relaxing decor (i.e., soft colors, patterns, and textures)

Recommended multi-user lactation room (recommended dimensions: 12' by 16')

All the requirements of the Recommended Lactation Room (see above), plus:

- Multiple chairs and footrests, as needed
- Screen or partition to section off private areas
- Multi-user hospital-grade breast pump

"OCCUPIED" SIGN



LACTATION ROOM OCCUPIED

FINDING SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Below is additional information that might be useful in planning, implementing, or evaluating the strategies discussed in this document.

Baby-Friendly USA

Information about the Baby-Friendly designation process and requirements and a list of all Baby-Friendly facilities in the United States.
<http://www.babyfriendlyusa.org>

Breastfeeding Promotion Program New York State Department of Health

Provides breastfeeding resources and information.

<http://www.health.ny.gov/community/pregnancy/breastfeeding>

La Leche League International (LLLI)

The LLLI helps mothers worldwide to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information, and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother.

<http://www.llli.org>

Breastfeeding & Working: WorkAndPump.com

Web site with practical advice and help for mothers who are trying to balance breastfeeding and work.

<http://www.workandpump.com>

The Business Case for Breastfeeding Health Resources and Services Administration

Program with several resources, including tool kits and guidelines, to help employers understand the benefits of making accommodations for breastfeeding mothers.

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/government-in-action/business-case-for-breastfeeding>

Breastfeeding Laws

National Conference of State Legislatures Inventory of state legislation related to breastfeeding.

<http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>

WIC Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (commonly called WIC) offers food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services for low-income women, infants, and children. than non-breastfeeding mothers. WIC has a website dedicated to supporting breastfeeding moms:

<https://wicbreastfeeding.fns.usda.gov/>

To find contact information for your local WIC program.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts>

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