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# Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care

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Halton Baby-Friendly Initiative

## Introduction

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This handbook is designed to help child care centres support breastfeeding families. It includes practical information and tips for how to be a breastfeeding-friendly child care centre, a sample breastfeeding policy, a sample public breastfeeding statement and information on breastmilk handling and storage.

## The importance of breastfeeding

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The World Health Organization (WHO), Health Canada and the Canadian Paediatric Society recommend babies are exclusively breastfed for the first six months and continued for two years and beyond with the introduction of complementary solid foods at six months old. The right to breastfeed is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

## Breastfeeding is good for children

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- Fewer illnesses (including ear, chest and bladder infections)
- Fewer hospital visits
- Healthier stomach and gut, therefore less likely to have diarrhea and other stomach upsets
- Lower risk of allergies, diabetes, obesity, some childhood cancers, and other chronic diseases
- Lower risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)
- Promotes closeness with parent
- Promotes proper jaw development
- Builds healthy eating habits

## Breastfeeding is good for parents

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- Lower risk of ovarian cancer, breast cancer, type 2 diabetes and postpartum mood disorders for breastfeeding parent
- Promotes closeness between parent and child
- Saves money

## Breastfeeding is good for the community

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- Improved the health of community
- Decreased costs to the healthcare system
- Less waste going to the landfill and recycling depots

## Breastfeeding is good for child care providers

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- Breastfed children tend to get sick less often (fewer ear infections, colds and flu)
- Breastfeeding can help children with the transition to childcare by providing comfort before, during and after child care.
- Breastfeeding-friendly child care centres are important to many families looking for child care. Being a breastfeeding-friendly child care centre can be included in marketing materials.

## Breastfeeding-friendly child care centres

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Child care centres are busy places and space is often in high demand. A room designated for breastfeeding is not needed (and not always possible). While breastfeeding parents can feed their children anytime, anywhere, some parents might enjoy having access to a quiet corner in a room or use of a semi-private room. Making these available to parents upon request would be helpful.

## Basic ideas to make breastfeeding welcome for families

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- A child care centre breastfeeding policy known by staff
- A public breastfeeding policy displayed in a visible location
- Window decals with the international breastfeeding symbol at building entrances
- A comfortable, adult-sized chair
- A place to breastfeed in a quiet location with potential for greater privacy (if requested)
- Access to a sink with hot and cold running water
- Access to a garbage can

## Sending in breastmilk

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*(can be included in your parent handbook)*

### **Information for parents sending breastmilk**

- Bring expressed breastmilk in daily. Only send the amount needed for one day.
- Bring expressed breastmilk in a closed container that is clearly labelled with your child's name and date.
- Ideally, the breastmilk is provided in the container (eg. Cup or bottle) that your child will use to drink it.
- Transport breastmilk using a cooler with ice packs at 4°C or below.
- Containers must be refrigerated upon arrival at the centre.
- Thawed breastmilk cannot be re-frozen.

*Information for parents on expression and storage of breastmilk is available from*

[www.halton.ca/haltonparents](http://www.halton.ca/haltonparents)

### **Information for child care staff**

- Ensure expressed breastmilk is stored in the refrigerator upon arrival at the centre, and that the container is clearly labelled.
- When warming breastmilk, put container in a bowl of warm water. Do not heat breastmilk in the microwave.
- Refrigerated or frozen breastmilk that the child does not drink will be sent home daily.
- Breastmilk stored at room temperature for longer than two hours must be discarded.
- Discard unused heated breastmilk after two hours.
- Thawed breastmilk cannot be re-frozen.

For more detailed information on handling breastmilk, consult the Halton Region Child Care Resource Manual, Part 1

<https://www.halton.ca/Repository/Child-Care-Health-Resource-Manual-Part-1>

## **Breastfeeding-friendly child care centre self-assessment tool**

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*These are some ways to assess whether your child care centre is breastfeeding-friendly. You may not be able to check off all of the items initially, but working towards saying yes to all of these will help you become a breastfeeding-friendly child care centre.*

- We have a breastfeeding-friendly child care centre welcoming families to breastfeed anytime, anywhere.
- Our centre has a policy that describes the centre's commitment and practices related to breastfeeding.
- Staff are familiar with the breastfeeding policy and can refer to it as needed.
- Staff recognize that breastfeeding is a human right and protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- Staff are aware that breastmilk is an essential part of breastfed children's meals and the only food requirement for babies under 6 months old, with introduction of solid foods at around 6 months and continued breastfeeding for two years and longer.
- Staff are aware of the importance of breastfeeding and are sensitive to the needs of breastfeeding families; for example, making them feel welcome to breastfeed when they drop off and pick up their child at the centre.
- Our centre welcomes parents to visit during the day to feed their children.
- If requested, our centre has a comfortable place for parents to breastfeed their children (a comfortable, adult sized chair, in a quiet location if possible).
- Parents are welcome and encouraged to send expressed breastmilk for their child to drink while at the centre.
- Staff will use breastfeeding inclusive language (for example, "breastfeeding", "nursing" and "giving baby a bottle") and avoid using "formula" to describe all infant feeding.
- Breastfeeding-friendly play is encouraged; for example, children pretending to breastfeed their dolls or stuffed animals.
- Books and materials showing children breastfeeding are available in our centre.
- Employees are encouraged and supported to breastfeed their own children, including when they return to work.

## Sample child care centre breastfeeding policy

*A Breastfeeding policy is recommended to provide clear guidelines about how to support breastfeeding in the child care centre. Contact the Halton Region BFI Coordinator by calling 311 if you would like support with developing your policy. Editable file available upon request.*

<b>Name of childcare centre</b>	
Breastfeeding policy	Policy number:
Approved by:	Latest revision date:
Approval date:	Next revision due:
Responsible for review:	Revision frequency:
<p><b>Policy statement</b></p> <p>_____ child care centre recognizes that breastfeeding is a normal and natural part of a child's first years and that there are many health and developmental benefits of continued breastfeeding while in child care.</p> <p>As such, _____ child care centre encourages staff, students, volunteers and families to have a positive, accepting attitude towards breastfeeding.</p> <p>_____ child care centre acknowledges that Health Canada and the Canadian Paediatric Society recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months with continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond, with the introduction of complementary solid foods at around six months.</p> <p>Breastfeeding is a human right, and is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code.</p>	
<p><b>Practices</b></p> <p>_____ child care centre promotes and supports families in continuing to breastfeed their children in care. In keeping with this philosophy, our centre will adhere to the following practices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Provide a welcoming atmosphere that encourages families and employees to initiate and continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school.</li> <li>2. Provide a comfortable space for parents to breastfeed their children on site but welcome them to breastfeed wherever they are comfortable.</li> <li>3. Provide a space in the refrigerator for storage of expressed breastmilk.</li> </ol>	

4. Educate staff and families about the benefits of breastfeeding through literature and provide referrals to community organizations for breastfeeding support if needed.
5. Staff will be educated in the proper storage and handling of human milk. This child care facility will follow the guideline as outlined in the *Halton Region Child Care Health Resource, Part 1*
6. Babies who are not able to sit at a table yet will be held when feeding, and fed according to their hunger cues. Bottles are not to be propped.
7. Information promoting breastfeeding will be displayed, for example, a public breastfeeding policy, posters stating breastfeeding is welcome, photos of families breastfeeding, window decals welcoming breastfeeding.
8. Staff are educated about the breastfeeding policy and can refer to it as needed.
9. Breastfeeding employees are provided with a flexible schedule to allow for time to breastfeed or express breastmilk, while still working their regular number of hours for the day.
10. Discrimination and harassment of breastfeeding families in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

**Reference documents/sources**

Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Centre Self-Assessment tool  
*See page 4 of this document*

Halton Region Child Care Health Resource Manual  
[Part 1](#)  
[Part 2](#)

Breastfeeding in Public Spaces – Halton Baby-Friendly Initiative  
[www.babyfriendlyhalton.ca/BFpublicspaces](http://www.babyfriendlyhalton.ca/BFpublicspaces)

Breastfeeding rights – Halton Baby-Friendly Initiative  
[www.babyfriendlyhalton.ca/rights](http://www.babyfriendlyhalton.ca/rights)

**Appendix A**

Sample public breastfeeding statement

## Appendix A: sample public breastfeeding statement

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*Editable file available upon request. Contact the Halton Region BFI Coordinator by calling 311.*

### **Our childcare centre supports breastfeeding!**



**We are a breastfeeding-friendly child care centre which means parents are welcome to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. Please ask a staff member if you prefer a private place to breastfeed.**

- Breastfeeding and breastmilk are important for babies and children.
- Breastfeeding is protected under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- The World Health Organization (WHO), Health Canada, Canadian Paediatric Society recommend that babies are exclusively breastfed for six months, with continued breastfeeding for two years and beyond, with the introduction of complementary solid foods at around six months.