



Breastfeeding Support at Conferences/Meetings

More and more mothers today choose to give their infants the healthiest start in life possible by breastfeeding. Thanks to abundant research, all major health organizations today promote breastfeeding as the perfect form of infant nutrition, and call on local communities to provide the support new mother need to be successful. Since breastfeeding rates in Wisconsin are increasing, you will find that more and more of your conference or meeting attendees have concerns about whether they can bring a nursing baby to the conference or, alternatively, where there is a private space that they can pump or express breastmilk for their baby being cared for elsewhere.

What can you do to support breastfeeding mothers at your conference or meeting?

- ⌘ In your registration and conference brochures, make it known that accommodations are made or will be made for breastfeeding mothers.
- ⌘ Provide a private space where a mother may go to express or pump her milk. This space should include a door with a lock, an electrical outlet, and handwashing facilities. If possible, having a small refrigerator in the area is also helpful. Some conferences provide a rented breast pump to which a mother may attach her own pumping kit. Most mothers will expect to bring their own portable breast pump. It is helpful to have a staff member assigned to oversee the area and be available to offer help if needed.
- ⌘ Consider offering affordable childcare to conference attendees.
- ⌘ Consider offering a safe childcare/play area for those attendees who bring a support person to watch their breastfeeding baby or young children during the conference sessions.
- ⌘ Make it known to conference attendees that mothers and children are welcome to breastfeed anywhere in the conference site.
- ⌘ Consider including statements such as the following in conference materials and sessions:
 - For conferences where a number of infants and young children are likely to be present:
"We appreciate the time our speakers have given to preparing their presentations and we all want to share in what they have to say to us. If you are here without small children, please take a seat in the front of the room. We have allowed space in the back of the room for children who need to move around. If you have a baby in arms who gets fussy or chooses to "talk," remember that some people may not be able to hear over baby's sounds as well as you can. Even happy sounds may prevent another person from hearing the speaker. A very sad baby or child can be comforted outside the session room where you can give him/her your focused attention." Adapted from La Leche League Area Conference session introduction materials.
 - For conferences where infants and young children are less likely to be present:
"Mothers may bring quiet, breastfeeding babies. Due to the intense nature of the sessions, most mothers find it easiest to bring a support person to watch the baby outside the meeting room between feedings. Please respect the needs of other registrants and care for your baby outside the room if he/she becomes disruptive or if a faculty member asks you to do so." Adapted from International Childbirth Educators Association Professional Training Workshop brochure, 1999.