



## **Taking Care of Breastfed Babies - for Childcare Centers**

**M**any mothers want to continue breastfeeding after they return to work or school. They feel good knowing their milk helps keep their babies healthy, and they savor the special closeness they feel with their babies, especially when they must be away all day.

When babies are healthy, everyone benefits, including your childcare facility! You can help breastfeeding mothers make an easy transition back to work or school.

- ⌘ Provide a private, comfortable place for the breastfeeding mother to nurse her child, but also let her know that she is welcome to breastfeed in the presence of others if she wishes.
- ⌘ Display posters and photographs on the walls of babies being breastfed.
- ⌘ Encourage mothers to come and breastfeed comfortably and at their convenience.
- ⌘ Encourage peer support for breastfeeding mothers/families.
- ⌘ Work with family members to develop the baby's individual breastfeeding support plan. Identify who is to do what and when. Update individual plans regularly.
- ⌘ Help the day begin and end calmly by offering the mother a place to rock and breastfeed her baby. This quiet time can help baby transition peacefully to other caregivers, and helps make the drive home easier and more relaxed.
- ⌘ Realize that breastfed babies are used to being held closely and often. Like any baby, breastfed babies prefer being held to being in a crib.
- ⌘ Follow appropriate procedures for handling human milk. Mothers work hard to express their milk, and care should be taken so it is not wasted.

### **Helping breastfed babies adjust to the childcare setting**

Being separated from "Mommy" can be a difficult adjustment for any child or infant. Holding and cuddling is important for baby's development and can be the secret to a peaceful and enriching childcare experience. Giving baby a blanket that has been in contact with the mother's skin may also comfort the baby.

### **What breastmilk is like**

Breastmilk has many healthy ingredients not found in infant formulas, such as protective antibodies to fight disease. It even has specific antibodies to germs and viruses the baby's family has been exposed to. Human milk is priceless and cannot be bought in any store. It should be handled with special care so it will not be wasted.

Breastmilk looks different from formula or whole milk. It is thinner and sometimes has a slightly bluish tint. The fatty part of the milk separates and rises to the top. To blend together again, simply gently rotate the bottle or container back and forth. Because of the unique composition of human milk, you will notice that breastfed babies usually have soft and/or runny stools. This is normal!

## Handling human milk

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics and Centers for Disease Control, breastmilk should be given the same care and respect as storing and handling other foods and nutritional supplements. The milk can be stored in the refrigerator or freezer along with other foods.

- ⌘ Breastmilk should be stored in small containers labeled with the baby's name and the date the milk was collected and, if previously frozen, the date the milk was thawed.
- ⌘ Discuss your center's policy for storing breastmilk with the mother, as the guidelines you follow may not be the same as what she is following at home. Work with the mother on a plan for providing breastmilk that will benefit everyone.
- ⌘ Thaw breastmilk in the refrigerator or under running water. Warm breastmilk under warm running water or in a pan of warm (not hot) water. Never microwave breast milk! Microwaving destroys antibodies in human milk and can create hot spots that could scald the baby's mouth.

## Feeding the breastfed baby

- ⌘ Breastmilk is digested more easily than formula, so breastfed babies usually get hungry every 1 ½ to 3 hours.
- ⌘ Start by feeding the baby a small amount of breastmilk and add more as needed.
- ⌘ Hold baby closely, facing the caregiver. Some breastfed babies need more time to get used to an artificial nipple. Look for hunger cues (mouth movements, rooting, sucking on hands) and offer a feeding then.
- ⌘ Feed the baby slowly.
- ⌘ Orthodontic nipples may work better for breastfed babies. The holes in the nipple should be pointed toward the roof of the baby's mouth and the nipple should be placed all the way into the baby's mouth so that baby's lips are folded away from the nipple. Never force-feed any baby.

## Ways to offer loving support

Breastfeeding is natural, but not always easy. Working moms have many competing demands that can affect their milk supply. Your support can make the difference.

- ⌘ Ask the mother what to feed her baby. Many mothers want their babies to be fed only breastmilk; others may choose to provide both breastmilk and formula.
- ⌘ Talk with the mother about her special requests if difficulties arise. For instance, if baby gets hungry in the last hour or so before mother arrives at the end of the day, does she want you to provide a pacifier or a small amount of breastmilk?
- ⌘ Tell her you are proud of her efforts to provide her milk for her baby.
- ⌘ Give her names of resource people in your community who can help with breastfeeding.