

TAKE ACTION: Promote and Support Breastfeeding Across FNS Programs



Increasing breastfeeding is one of our national goals for improving the quality of life of FNS program participants. Breastfeeding supports a healthier future for moms and their babies. Breastmilk contains the right amounts of nutrients to meet a baby’s needs and is easily digested. It helps babies grow best and helps protect them from colds and ear infections. Breastfeeding helps the mother recover from pregnancy and get into shape. It can also help decrease the risk of some types of cancer in women, and may reduce a mother’s risk of breaking her hip and having weaker bones after menopause.



The USDA National Breastfeeding Promotion Campaign, “Loving Support Makes Breastfeeding Work,” helps to increase the number of breastfed babies. This campaign provides a consistent breastfeeding message in materials, training, and support for FNS program participants. It is being implemented under the leadership of WIC programs across the country. To learn more, go to: [USDA Loving Support Campaign](#).

While the WIC Program plays a critical leadership role at the national, State, and local levels, all those in the FNS/USDA community can support and promote breastfeeding. FNS programs have many shared participants and a shared goal of promoting healthy eating behaviors. Staff in FNS programs can work together to promote breastfeeding and create workplaces that are breastfeeding-friendly. Simple actions can help breastfeeding mothers and their families feel more comfortable. These actions can be accomplished within your program’s requirements. Use these easy-to-do ideas and online resources to promote and support breastfeeding among your clients:

Encourage Pregnant Women and Mothers to Get Breastfeeding Support

- Learn where the WIC programs are in your area; see [WIC State agency contacts](#). Refer pregnant women and new mothers to WIC for breastfeeding support and to learn if they qualify for nutrition support.
- Work with your local WIC Program to support local breastfeeding peer counseling programs for pregnant women, new mothers, and their families.
- Encourage new and breastfeeding mothers to join a local breastfeeding support group.

Create A Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace

- Contact your local WIC Program about providing in-service training on breastfeeding to your program staff.
- Collaborate with your local WIC Program to obtain and distribute materials to reinforce the Loving Support message. Ask local WIC Program staff to contribute an article promoting breastfeeding for your employee newsletter.
- Increase awareness of the importance of breastfeeding:

♥ Display breastfeeding posters and other materials in frequently visited office areas, such as: Breastfed Babies Welcome Here materials; Father's support materials; and breastfeeding materials from FNS' WIC Works website.

♥ Show the "Fathers Supporting Breastfeeding" video in client waiting rooms (order the video and discussion guide at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/Fathers/SupportingBreastfeeding.HTM).

♥ Create a "Beautiful Breastfed Babies" wall display. Ask employees and clients who have breastfed for photos of their babies.



- Develop policies and provide services at your workplace that support breastfeeding by staff and program participants. For example:
 - ♥ Encourage mothers to breastfeed in your facility, including all client service areas, and allow for mid-day breastfeeding breaks for employees.
 - ♥ Provide a room or private area for mothers to breastfeed their babies and pump their milk (see FNS Breastfeeding Mothers' Room).
 - ♥ Provide a refrigerator to store breastmilk.
- Remove signs or displays that advertise or promote infant formula, baby bottles, or pacifiers in client service areas.

Celebrate Breastfeeding!

- Work with your local WIC Program to organize activities to celebrate breastfeeding during World Breastfeeding Week, Mother's Day, or Father's Day. For example, work with your local WIC Program to:
 - ♥ Recognize breastfeeding mothers on Mother's Day. Share a Loving Support Breastfeeding pamphlet with them.
 - ♥ Recognize fathers' support on Father's Day. Share a Fathers Supporting Breastfeeding pamphlet with them.
 - ♥ Ask a local official to sign a proclamation for Breastfeeding Week and display it in waiting or counseling rooms.

Create a Breastfeeding-Friendly Environment in Your Community

Work with the local WIC Program to:



- Display breastfeeding posters and pamphlets at local libraries, hospitals, health centers, churches, and community events.
- Invite a breastfeeding expert from the local WIC Program to speak at a community event.
- Educate policy-makers to change policies and other barriers that prohibit or discourage breastfeeding in public.

