

# CREATING **BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY** PUBLIC SPACES



A GUIDE TO HELP YOUR ORGANIZATION  
SUPPORT BREASTFEEDING FAMILIES.

# WELCOME BREASTFEEDING FAMILIES!

BE A BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY PUBLIC SPACE IN SAINT PAUL AND RAMSEY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

## WHY BREASTFEEDING/CHESTFEEDING?



Babies fed human milk receive protection against chronic diseases and acute infections – conditions like diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. The longer a baby breastfeeds, the stronger the protections. Breastfeeding parents gain significant health protections against certain cancers and heart disease the longer they breastfeed.

And yet, most families do not reach their feeding goals. They need support from their workplace, medical office, childcare provider, family and the community to continue to provide human milk beyond the first few weeks.

This document will guide an organization through the process of welcoming and affirming breastfeeding/chestfeeding families. Using the term “chestfeeding” includes families where the parent does not self-identify as female. Using gender neutral language where possible is also more inclusive.

## WHAT IS A BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY PUBLIC SPACE?

A Breastfeeding Friendly Public Space is an organization that follows Minnesota Statute section 145.905 *A mother may breastfeed in any location, public or private, where the mother and child are otherwise authorized to be, irrespective of whether the nipple of the mother's breast is uncovered during or incidental to the breastfeeding.*

The following are required to be recognized by Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health (SPRCPH):

- Written guidelines or a policy for the organization outlining their responsibilities and promises to breastfeeding families
- Clear signage, such as the international breastfeeding symbol
- Education for staff and volunteers about welcoming breastfeeding families
- A quiet corner for families and/or a private space for milk expression



## INSIDE THIS GUIDE

This guide is not exhaustive of all the variations of a Breastfeeding Friendly Public Space. More information and case studies are found on the SPRCPH website. This guide includes:

- A self-assessment for your organization to determine strengths and areas that can be improved
- Examples and guidelines for setting up lactation spaces
- Examples and guidelines for creating and posting signage
- Information about educating staff and volunteers and creating a policy or a set of guidelines

Direct specific questions to [SHIP@ramseycounty.us](mailto:SHIP@ramseycounty.us)

For more information and to access additional resources, visit [www.ramseycounty.us/breastfeeding](http://www.ramseycounty.us/breastfeeding)

## SELF-ASSESSMENT: HOW BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY ARE WE?

There is a range of ways to support breastfeeding/chestfeeding families. While you may consider your organization very supportive, there are likely additional steps you can take in affirming the families that come through your door.

Use this self-assessment by circling the statements that correspond most closely to your organization.

### WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

Breastfeeding Neutral (good)	Breastfeeding Friendly (better)	Breastfeeding Advocate (best)
We don't discourage breastfeeding, but we also don't encourage it	We welcome families to breastfeed, and let them know we have a semi-private area should that be desired	We welcome breastfeeding and have a private space should someone need that for modesty, quiet, or to pump milk
We don't tell anyone to leave when they breastfeed – they are free to do what they need to do!	We tell families (with signs or verbally) that they may breastfeed anywhere at any time – sometimes that invitation is very important!	We tell families they can breastfeed anywhere, anytime, and even have special deals or treats for them (such as a free beverage) – they work very hard!

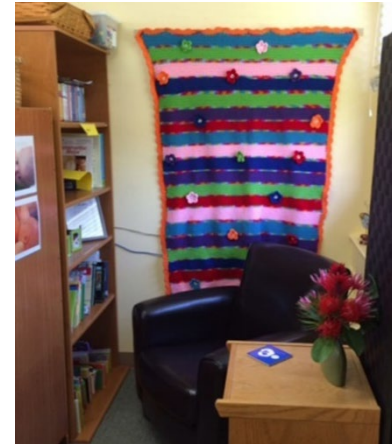
### SIGNAGE

Breastfeeding Neutral (good)	Breastfeeding Friendly (better)	Breastfeeding Advocate (best)
We don't have signage, or only have signage in the nursery or children's play area	We have signage that families can breastfeed in any of our spaces	We have signage that families can breastfeed in any of our spaces and information about our private lactation space open to the public
We don't have any breastfeeding or mother/baby related artwork or imagery	We have artwork or imagery that depicts mothers and babies	We have artwork that depicts breastfeeding, reflecting the racial and cultural diversity of our community in terms of race, ethnicity, and gender identity

### EDUCATION AND GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

Breastfeeding Neutral (good)	Breastfeeding Friendly (better)	Breastfeeding Advocate (best)
It is generally understood that our employees and volunteers support breastfeeding	We have educational posters for employees and volunteers about why and how we support breastfeeding families	We incorporate educational messages about how and why we support, promote and protect breastfeeding into our training of new employees and volunteers
We support breastfeeding but do not have a written guideline or a policy	We have written guidelines or a policy about why and how we are a breastfeeding friendly public space	We have incorporated our written policy/guidelines into our employee and volunteer training manuals

## WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT



## CREATING A SEMI-PRIVATE LACTATION SPACE IN A PUBLIC SETTING

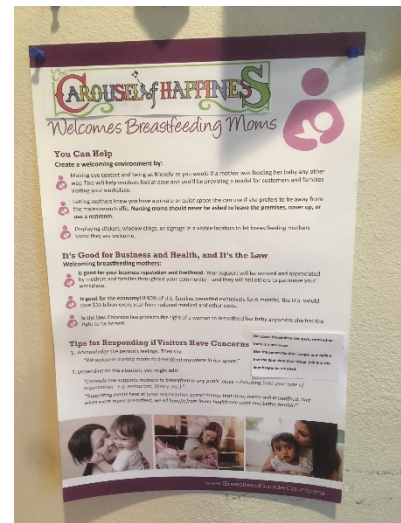
Organizations that want to be welcoming of breastfeeding/chestfeeding families need comfortable, semi-private options, such as a rocking chair, a couch in a quiet corner, or a spot to the side or in the back of a main gathering space. The goal is to offer families options depending on their needs; some will need less stimulus and noise for their child. Families should not be required to use this quiet area, rather it is an option for families who desire it.

## CREATING A PRIVATE LACTATION SPACE IN A PUBLIC SETTING

Organizations may have private lactation spaces available for the public to use, especially if they have patrons who spend a half day or more on the premises or workers in the neighborhood who don't have a privacy option at their own worksite. This is important for settings such as libraries, houses of worship, conference centers, or community buildings.

These private options can be used for breastfeeding families for feeding or for expressing milk. This lactation space should have a chair or couch. A small table or flat surface and an electrical outlet are important for those who are pumping. It may also have a sink for washing hands or pump parts, a lamp, a refrigerator for milk storage, privacy screens, or a foot stool as fits with your needs. You may want to include refreshments, educational materials, artwork, a visitor log, or a live feed to the event a person is attending, in addition to extra seating or a play area for family members. Lactation spaces should not be in a restroom. The parent is collecting food for their baby; a room with a toilet is not a sanitary location.

# SIGNAGE



## WELCOMING SIGNAGE

Signage should be clear, simple, informative, welcoming, and encouraging. It should be designed to create bridges rather than barriers. Signage can be as simple as the International Breastfeeding Symbol or as detailed as directions to your lactation space.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Placement:** ensure signage is at each outside door and again in waiting areas or near the areas where families tend to congregate. If you are reaching people about the availability of a private space for milk expression, you may consider having signage on the inside of a women's bathroom or toilet stalls as that is often the default pumping location when a lactation space cannot be found.

**Language and look:** try to use clear and simple language and consider gender neutral language (such as "families", "parents", or "visitors") and imagery. You may want to create your own signs that reflect your organization's logo, mission, and personality. Consider translating signage into the languages of your patrons.

# EDUCATION AND GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

## EDUCATION OF STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

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Your organization will need to provide information and education to staff and volunteers about WHY and HOW you are supportive of breastfeeding/chestfeeding families. It is not common for staff to have objections to a member of the public breastfeeding on the premises, rather it is more common for other patrons to be complaining. Education will help your staff and volunteers to know the organization is behind them and will provide dialogue to use when communicating with patrons about a concern.

Education and information can be provided in a variety of venues, such as an educational poster in the employee break room, incorporating it into new employee or volunteer orientation, or incorporating it into regular communication with employees and staff.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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Consider using the language of your volunteers and employees when identifying educational materials. Educational posters are available at: [www.ramseycounty.us/breastfeeding](http://www.ramseycounty.us/breastfeeding).

## POLICY OR GUIDELINES

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Organizations are encouraged to develop a lactation policy or a set of guidelines that codify the good practices and good intentions for supporting breastfeeding/chestfeeding patrons or guests. Policies or guidelines should include the following components:

- Rationale for the reasons the organization is supportive of breastfeeding/chestfeeding families, such as recognition of the lifelong health protections for parents and infants
- Recognition of the protections for breastfeeding in public: Minnesota Statute section 145.905
- Commitment to display welcoming signage and where this signage will be
- Commitment to provide information and education to staff and volunteers
- How the organization will create a welcoming environment, as well as any special “perks” for breastfeeding/chestfeeding patrons or guests, such as a coffee shop offering a free hot beverage to a breastfeeding patron
- Commitment to providing a semi-private or a private lactation space, that is not a bathroom, along with information about accessing the space, maintenance of the space, and the accessories that will be in or near the space such as a table, sink, refrigerator, cleaning wipes, waste basket, internet access, electrical outlet, light fixture, artwork, or signage
- Contact details for those seeking more information or needing support with implementing the policy or guidelines

A policy template is available at: [www.ramseycounty.us/breastfeeding](http://www.ramseycounty.us/breastfeeding).

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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A policy or a set of guidelines may include information about:

- The difference between a lactation space meant for the public and one meant for employees
- Frequency of updates or training for employees and volunteers
- Scheduling of the lactation space and documenting how it is being used
- Communication of the welcoming status and the availability of the lactation space to the public, patrons, and staff and volunteers, as well as to persons on the premises as contract workers or to participate in trainings or conferences