

# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## TOOLKIT Overview

### Overview

1. Environmental
2. Family Support
3. Infant Feeding
4. Professional Development
5. Breastfeeding Policy



### The Case for Breastfeeding in Early Care

More than half of mothers and families in the United States, including Virginia, don't meet their own breastfeeding goals. Many of these mothers plan to exclusively breastfeed for the first six months, and to continue breastfeeding up to 12 months or beyond, as recommended by health experts. As mothers return to work and school, families are looking for early care child care centers and family child care homes that are knowledgeable and supportive of breastfeeding. The benefits of breastfeeding for early care programs extend beyond family satisfaction, and they include improved infant and child attendance and healthier children. Early care programs who become 'breastfeeding-friendly' have an opportunity to receive recognition, and stand out from other child care programs. Furthermore, early care programs who are supportive of staff breastfeeding have better staff morale resulting in higher employee retention rates.



### Virginia's Five Breastfeeding Standards

In order to create a 'breastfeeding friendly early care program', providers need to have the knowledge, skills, and resources to support breastfeeding families. The Virginia Department of Health and early care partners have encouraged breastfeeding friendly practices for many years, but in 2018 Virginia developed five breastfeeding friendly standards for early care programs. These standards provide guidance for developing and maintaining a breastfeeding friendly child care program.

Virginia's five standards are a streamlined reflection of the components of the *Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers*, developed by the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

1. **Environmental:** environment reflects normalizing, positive, and culturally responsive messages about breastfeeding
2. **Family Support:** provides information and resources to families
3. **Infant Feeding:** demonstrates infant feeding best practices
4. **Professional Development:** provides training to early care providers in breast feeding topic areas
5. **Breastfeeding policy:** establishes a policy shared with families and staff

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### Goals for the Resource Toolkit:

This toolkit describes each of the five breastfeeding friendly standards, provides guidance on how early care providers can successfully meet the standards, and connects providers to resources, websites, and other tools. The toolkit provides an **easy-to-use one-page document for each standard**. When early sites are meeting these standards, they are encouraged to apply to the [Virginia Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Recognition Program](#).



VDH's 2008 Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers Resource Kit includes additional resources for child care centers, including a self-appraisal questionnaire, action plans, sample actions plans, and other educational resources. To access this in-depth resource, visit VDH's website: [VDHLiveWell.com/breastfeeding](http://VDHLiveWell.com/breastfeeding)

### References for the Toolkit:

1. **Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Centers**, Virginia Department of Health; adapted from the December 2008, Wisconsin Partnership to Activity and Nutrition Breastfeeding Committee. Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers.
2. **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**. The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General; 2011.

# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Environmental

### #1 of 5 Standards

#### 1. Environmental

#### 2. Family Support

#### 3. Infant Feeding

#### 4. Professional Development

#### 5. Breastfeeding Policy



A 'breastfeeding friendly early care program' provides an inclusive environment that communicates that breastfeeding is welcome and will be supported within the program. The program has a culturally-responsive, breastfeeding-friendly environment.



### 1. Space: Provide a clean and private space

- **Minimum:** At a minimum this space includes a comfortable chair and privacy for the mother. Privacy can be provided by designating a separate room for mothers or a section in a room divided by screen or curtain. For smaller spaces, privacy can be provided by supplying a clean nursing cover. Other items in this area could be a foot stool, pillow to support baby, disinfectant wipes, and access to water.
- **Room/Space Options:** Breastfeeding friendly facilities also provide space for their staff who may be breastfeeding or pumping. The Business Case for Breastfeeding by the Dept. of Health and Humans Services has lactation room options, [Figure 4 on pg. 11](#), focused on basic, better, and best model.
- **Legal Rights to Breastfeed:** Reminder about the Code of Virginia Law-Right to Breastfeed in Public, 2015, Va. Code § 32.1-370, "A mother may breastfeed in any place where the mother is lawfully present." [Breastfeeding Law Fact Sheet](#)

### 2. Share information about breastfeeding and milk expression (pumping)

- Mention breastfeeding and expressed milk in written and verbal communication when educating families about infant feeding practices
- Limit the visibility of infant formula and related materials

# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Environmental

### #1 of 5 Standards

#### 1. Environmental

#### 2. Family Support

#### 3. Infant Feeding

#### 4. Professional Development

#### 5. Breastfeeding Policy



### 3. Visual Prompts: posters, photos, and children's books and toys that support breastfeeding

- Display images of racially and ethnically diverse breastfeeding families; representative of the populations being or could be served at the center
- There should be books, posters and play toys that are age appropriate that promote breastfeeding. Earlycare providers should engage in open dialogue with children and support answering their questions
- **Posters and photos that normalize breastfeeding:**
  - [CACFP Mother's Milk Welcome Here](#) (English & Spanish)
  - [WIC Breastfeeding Posters](#)
  - [Nemours Posters](#) (English and Spanish)
- **List of children's books and toys:**
  - [Eastern Virginia Medical School Books and Toys](#)
  - [Carolina Global Breastfeeding Friendly Books and Toys](#)



Access downloadable resources on Child Care Aware-Virginia [webpage](#):  
Posters, brochures, children's books and toys



# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Family Support

### #2 of 5 Standards

#### 1. Environmental

#### 2. Family Support

#### 3. Infant Feeding

#### 4. Professional Development

#### 5. Breastfeeding Policy



Breastfeeding is supported when families are encouraged, and provided accurate, culturally responsive information and resources. The early care program provides resources and information about breastfeeding to new and enrolled families.



#### **Share Breastfeeding Policy:**

The breastfeeding policy should be shared when new families visit and enroll. Staff who care for infant and toddlers should be familiar with the policy and comfortable talking and discussing the policy with families.

**Develop Infant Feeding Support Plans:** Staff should work with families to develop an individualized plan that is updated regularly.

#### **Verbalize and Initiate Ongoing Support:**

- Recognize that mothers may have strong feelings about continuing to breastfeed when they are separated from their babies. Providing breastfeeding support may increase a family's confidence in you as their child care provider.
- Put mothers in touch with other mothers at the center who have successfully combined breastfeeding and working or going to school.
- Encourage mothers to breastfeed onsite when baby is dropped off or picked up. Let them know there is a private space for breastfeeding on site if they prefer.
- Continually share specific written or web-based resources, based on questions and needs.

#### **Provide Local Breastfeeding Services and Resources:**

Breastfeeding parents need access to a variety of support systems and resources to successfully breastfeed. Provide local tools and resources if possible and share in a variety of formats, both by paper and electronically.

# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Family Support

#2 of 5 Standards

1. Environmental

2. Family Support

3. Infant Feeding

4. Professional Development

5. Breastfeeding Policy



**Breastfeeding support information can include the following:**

- Peer support groups
- Lactation consultants
- Breastfeeding coalitions and advocacy groups
- Postpartum counseling and support groups



**Local Virginia Resources**

- [Virginia Department of Health:](#) state and national resources and materials
- [Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition:](#) lists local coalitions and groups
- [Virginia Breastfeeding Advisory Committee:](#) lists state and local organizations and agencies
- [La Leche League:](#) (lila.org) a mother-to-mother support for breastfeeding group, find local leader or support group
- [International Lactation Consultant Associations:](#) (ilca.org) find a lactation consultant in an area

\*While these direct resources are helpful to families, other resources could include books and articles, and access to a computer with internet access, phone, or printer to access services as needed.



Access downloadable resources on [Child Care Aware-Virginia webpage:](#)  
[Tips for Breastfeeding Moms, Back to Work Toolkit, Infant Feeding Guide for Parents](#)

# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Infant Feeding

### #3 of 5 Standards

1. Environmental
2. Family Support
3. Infant Feeding
4. Professional Development
5. Breastfeeding Policy



Breastfeeding is supported when infants are fed on-demand, and when the program communicates with mothers/families about infant feeding preferences. The early care program is committed to infant feeding best practices.

### Infant Feeding Terminology

**On-Demand Feeding:** Babies are fed when they are showing signs of hunger, such as rooting, making sucking noises, and sucking on lips, hands, feet, and toys.

**Responsive Feeding:** The practice of recognizing and understanding when a baby is hungry or full and responding to those signs. Responsive feeding is related to all forms of feeding including breastfeeding, bottle feeding, and offering solid foods.

**Paced Bottled Feeding:** A method of bottle feeding that allows the infant to be more in control of the feeding pace. This feeding method slows down the flow of milk into the nipple and the baby's mouth, allowing the baby to eat more slowly, and take breaks. Paced feeding reduces the risk of overfeeding that may result in and childhood obesity.

**Expressed Breastmilk:** Milk that is removed from a woman's breast. This can be accomplished by hand expression, a manual or hand pump, or an electric pump.

### Infant Feeding Best Practices

- Infants are being fed on-demand when they show signs of hunger.
- Child care staff are implementing responsive and pace bottled feeding.
- Child care staff follow Virginia licensing guidelines when handling expressed breastmilk.
- Parents and families are valued partners in the child(ren) infant feeding and included in daily feeding logs and other communications.



# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Infant Feeding

### #3 of 5 Standards

#### 1. Environmental

#### 2. Family Support

#### 3. Infant Feeding

#### 4. Professional Development

#### 5. Breastfeeding Policy



### Hints to Bottle-Feeding a Breastmilk Fed Baby

- Breastmilk is digested quickly and easily. Babies receiving human milk usually eat more frequently than formula babies, timings between 1.5 to 3 hours.
- Feed the baby in a way that mimics breastfeeding and hold the baby in an upright position. Never prop a bottle or put a baby to bed with a bottle. Switch holding baby from your right arm to your left arm midway through a feeding. This helps with paced feedings and keeps baby from developing preference for one side.
- Let the baby control the start of the feeding. Stroke baby's lips with bottle to illicit a rooting response and wide-open mouth.
- Feed slowly. Liquid flows fast from bottling equipment. Pause frequently during feedings to burp, switch sides, or talk to the baby, and avoid holding the bottle vertically. Infants need time to recognize that they are full.
- Stop feeding when the baby is ready. Don't force a baby to finish the bottle. Don't wake a baby to take more if bottles are left unfinished.



### How to successfully implement this infant feeding standard?

Document implementation of this infant feeding standard in a breastfeeding policy, family handbook, staff training, standard operating procedures manual for employees, and/or family feeding and communication logs.



Access downloadable resources on [Child Care Aware-Virginia webpage](#): [Infant Feeding Plans](#), [Infant Feeding Guides](#) or [Care-Givers and Parents](#), and [Child and Adult Care Food Program Infant Feeding Pattern Fact Sheet](#).



# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Professional Development

### #4 of 5 Standards

1. Environmental
2. Family Support
3. Infant Feeding
- 4. Professional Development**
5. Breastfeeding Policy



Breastfeeding is supported when program staff are trained and knowledgeable about the benefits of breastfeeding, responsive feeding practices, how to promote breastfeeding and how to store and handle breastmilk. The early care program ensures that staff who care for children ages 0-3 and at least one director/administrator are trained to support and promote breastfeeding.



### Share and orient all staff to the center's breastfeeding policy:

It is important for all new and current employees at a child care program understand and have access to the center's breastfeeding policy. If changes are made, the policy is redistributed and shared with staff. All staff should be able to:

- Promote breastfeeding when mother is at the center.
- Create an community of respect for breastfeeding as the cultural norm.
- Identify and encourage the use of the space or room where mothers can breastfeed or express their milk.

### Provide professional development for all staff who care for children ages 0-3 years, and a minimum of one administrator following breastfeeding topics.

- The benefits of breastfeeding
- Infant feeding in response to baby cues
- Promoting and supporting human milk feeding babies
- Storage and handling of breastmilk

# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Professional Development

### #4 of 5 Standards

1. Environmental
2. Family Support
3. Infant Feeding
4. Professional Development
5. Breastfeeding Policy



### Two reminders about these trainings:

1. This training should align with Virginia's licensing guidance that regulates breastfeeding. [Virginia Licensing Requirement Impacting Breastfeeding](#)
2. Track your staff's training through a professional development log. This must be submitted when applying for [Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Recognition Program](#).



The Professional Development can be achieved through a variety of formats, including online trainings, Director provided, in-person training event, or in-person technical assistance.



Access downloadable resources and online trainings on [Child Care Aware-Virginia webpage](#).

**Online Trainings:** Penn State Extension-Better Kid Care Infant Feeding, Nemours Response Feeding Course

**Videos:** How to Support Breastfeeding Mothers and Families: A Simple Guide for Child Care Providers, Paced Bottle Feeding for the Breastfed Baby



## Breastfeeding Policy

### #5 of 5 Standards

1. Environmental
2. Family Support
3. Infant Feeding
4. Professional Development

### 5. Breastfeeding Policy



Breastfeeding is supported when a program has a written policy that reflects support for breastfeeding mothers and families, that is shared with staff and families. The early care program has a written policy that addresses criteria noted below.



### Staff Members included in Breastfeeding Policy:

Including employees and staff in a breastfeeding policy is recommended. A supportive work environment can have a positive influence on breastfeeding staff as they return to work. These breastfeeding mothers in the workplace are often happier, more productive, and less likely to resign.

Also, by including staff members in your breastfeeding policy it would increase your eligibility to be designated as a Virginia Breastfeeding Workplace Recognition Program. Visit [Virginia Breastfeeding Coalition](#) to learn more.

### The Written Policy should at a minimum include the following:

- a private lactation space is available for use
- staff to encourage and assist mothers to provide breastmilk to their children;
- infants to be fed on demand, and families will be informed about child's feeding preferences; and,
- staff to be trained on breastfeeding support practices, and handling breastmilk storage.

# Virginia's Breastfeeding Friendly Early Care Standards



## Breastfeeding Policy

### #5 of 5 Standards

1. Environmental
2. Family Support
3. Infant Feeding
4. Professional Development
5. Breastfeeding Policy

### Who should receive the breastfeeding policy?

- visitors who are interested in enrolling their infant or toddler at the center
- all currently enrolled children at the child care center
- all staff; including part-time and full time, or substitutes or other temporary staff



Access three model breastfeeding policies on [Child Care Aware-Virginia webpage.](#)