
Breastfeeding Policy and Procedure

Category:	Human Resources	Version:	V2025.1
Effective From:	March 2025	Next Review:	March 2026

Policy Statement

Our service is committed to offering flexible work arrangements in order to meet the needs of employees who are breastfeeding. We also recognise the importance of breastfeeding for both staff and babies and we aim to provide a workplace that enables mothers, who choose to breastfeed, to balance breastfeeding with their work responsibilities.

Background and Guiding Principles

We aim to provide a supportive environment for breastfeeding women.

The Australian Breastfeeding Association identifies three main criteria that determine a supportive workplace:

1. **Space** - The organisation provides a private space for employees to feed their baby or express milk.
2. **Time** - The organisation has a Breastfeeding Policy that clearly outlines the support for lactation breaks to allow a mother time to feed/express during working hours.
3. **Support** - The organisation has a comprehensive communication strategy in place for internal and external stakeholders.

“Employees are allowed to breastfeed in the workplace.

Employees can’t be discriminated against because they are breastfeeding. Making an employee feel uncomfortable about breastfeeding, or not providing adequate facilities or breaks, may be discrimination. It may also be a breach of work health and safety laws.

A best practice employer can support employees who are breastfeeding by making sure they have suitable facilities available – examples include a private room for breastfeeding, somewhere where the employee can store a breast pump, and a fridge where they store any breast milk. Employees should also be given appropriate breaks so that they can breastfeed or express.”¹

“Mums returning to work: breastfeeding options

*There are **many ways to keep breastfeeding** when returning to paid work. What works for you will depend on your workplace, working arrangements, child care arrangements and baby’s age.*

For example, you might be able to keep breastfeeding without changing your feeding routine by:

- *having your baby brought to you for breastfeeds,*
- *visiting your baby to breastfeed when you need to,*
- *working from home.*

Or you might be able to adjust your routine and do a mix of:

- *breastfeeding before and after starting work and at night,*
- *giving your baby expressed breastmilk or infant formula during the day when you’re at work.*

¹ “Returning to work from parental leave” Fair Work Ombudsman Australian Government (accessed on-line Feb 2025) <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/parental-leave/after-parental-leave/returning-to-work-from-parental-leave>

After about 3 months, you and your baby might be able to go longer between breastfeeds. This is because, at this age, babies start taking more milk at each feed.

And as babies get even older, they typically won't look for as many breastfeeds if you're not around. They might be happy with solid food and water while you're working and breastfeeds when you're at home together.

Breastfeeding and returning to paid work: talking with your employer

If you want to keep breastfeeding when you return to paid work, discuss your breastfeeding needs with your employer.

It's good to do this well before you go back to work. If you visit your workplace to introduce your baby to your workmates, this could be a good chance to make time to chat to your manager. You might even talk with your employer about breastfeeding before you go on parental leave.

You can discuss whether your workplace provides lactation breaks. Try to confirm your breastfeeding or expressing needs with your employer before returning.

Expressing breastmilk at work: practical things to consider

If your baby will drink expressed breastmilk, you might be able to express at work and safely store the milk for your baby to have another time. Expressing at work can also help you maintain your milk supply.

What you need to express

You can express breastmilk by hand, but a manual or electric pump can make expressing easier. A double pump can make it quicker.

You'll need certain things for expressing at your workplace:

- *a clean private area (not the toilet) with a comfortable chair,*
- *a clean refrigerator or freezer for storing expressed breastmilk,*
- *somewhere secure to store an electric or manual breast pump,*
- *a power point close to a low table, next to the chair (if you're using an electric breast pump),*
- *a wash basin and soap to wash hands and rinse out pump parts, and paper towels or a hand dryer,*
- *15-30 minutes to express milk during your lunch break and any other breaks if needed.*

When to express

*You might like to express your breastmilk at work at similar times to when your baby usually feeds, particularly if you do shift work. When you're getting started, it can help to have **flexible work hours and breaks** if you can. Once you're used to expressing at work during breaks and lunch time, things should get easier to manage. The number of times you need to express at work will depend on the age of your baby. For example, as solids begin to replace breastmilk, your baby will need less expressed breastmilk.*

How to transport expressed breastmilk

To safely transport your breastmilk home, breastmilk can travel:

- *in an insulated container like an esky or cooler bag with a freezer brick,*
- *either frozen or chilled – if the milk has thawed, use it within 4 hours. Don't refreeze it.*

Make sure your breastmilk is labelled with the date it was expressed. Place the labelled breastmilk in the refrigerator as soon as you arrive or in the freezer if it's still frozen.

*According to the Federal Sex Discrimination Act, it's **illegal to discriminate against a woman on the basis of breastfeeding**. Employers must make reasonable attempts to meet your needs if you want to breastfeed or express and store your milk while at work.”²*

Does my employer have to give me paid lactation breaks?

“Australian employers are not legally obliged to provide lactation breaks to their employees, however the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommends that breastfeeding women be entitled to at least one break per day for lactation, and that can also be accessed as a reduction in hours. The ILO further recommends that these breaks should be treated as paid working time.”³

This workplace policy has been designed to support the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding, in particular, to support mothers who wish to continue to breastfeed their babies after they return to work. This may be achieved by:

- babies being cared for at the service and mother's having opportunities to breastfeed throughout the day.
- another person caring for the baby may bring the baby into the workplace for the mother to breastfeed during the day.
- the mother may leave the premises to breastfeed in a location close by.
- the mother may express breast milk during the working day in order to maintain her milk supply and provide breast milk which can later be fed to her infant.

Procedures and Responsibilities

Protecting children and each other is a team approach.

Leadership and Management Responsibilities, including Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors and Responsible Persons will:

- Positively and clearly communicate all aspects of the policy and take a zero-tolerance approach to compliance.
- Understand and comply with all aspects of this policy and related legislation and support team members to do the same.
- Lead a culture of reflection and regular review of policies, seeking feedback from educators, families, children and other community agencies and professionals as appropriate.
- Discuss return to work requirements with pregnant employees prior to the commencement of parental leave.
- Meet with the employee prior to returning to ascertain their requirements and to collaboratively set a plan for supporting the return to work including lactation breaks.
- Be supportive and open to flexible options to support lactation and the return to work process, understanding that this period in the employees' career is for a limited time.
- Work collaboratively to determine the best way to achieve each person's needs.
- Seek approval from the Approved Provider where changes to facilities or work arrangements are required, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

Lactation Breaks

- Offer opportunities for lactation breaks to breastfeed or express breast milk during work hours. These should be mutually agreed upon and take into account the needs of the service in meeting ratios and qualification requirements as well as the needs of both mum and bub.

² “Breastfeeding: mums returning to work” Raising Children (accessed on-line Feb 2025) <https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/breastfeeding-bottle-feeding/expressing-working-travelling/breastfeeding-returning-to-work>

³ “Commonly asked questions about returning to work and breastfeeding” Australian Breastfeeding Association (accessed on-line Feb 2025) <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/resources/going-back-work>

- Offer up to one hour per day during work time for lactation breaks, where possible these should fit into rest pauses and meal breaks. Where additional breaks are identified, mutually agree on how this will be managed, for instance if the employee needs to go offsite then the travel time to and from the service would be in the employee's own time. This arrangement is to have prior agreement and would need to be managed to ensure compliance is also able to be achieved during times of extended absences.
- Be flexible in the way breaks are managed, for instance, morning and afternoon rest pauses may be combined to form a longer break if required.
- Communicate respectfully the agreed arrangements to other educators who are working along side returning mothers and seek their support in implementing.
- Ensure this policy is shared with employees returning to work.
- Be flexible with return to work practices including any options for temporary or permanent changes to hours or days.

Facilities

- Discuss the facilities to be provided with returning mothers and collaboratively agree on the best location given the service facilities and access to nearby facilities.
- Ensure the following:
 - A comfortable chair with access to power where needed for a breast pump
 - Determine the best fridge or freezer to store breastmilk, this may be a fridge located in a bottle prep or other fridge that is clean, hygienic and easily accessible
 - A location, such as a locker or clean cupboard for the storage of breast pumps
 - Handwashing facilities and a place for washing any equipment needed.

Expecting and New Mothers Returning to Work will:

- Be proactive in fulfilling the requirements of this service policy and related legislative requirements.
- Seek further guidance where required to fulfil your requirements.
- Report any concerns or non-compliance immediately to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Participate in the review of documents and provide constructive feedback to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Discuss return to work requirements with your Nominated Supervisor prior to the commencement of parental leave.
- Meet with the Nominated Supervisor prior to returning to discuss requirements and to collaboratively set a plan for a smooth return to work including lactation breaks.
- Be flexible and understanding of accommodating breaks while ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children in your care.
- Consider the combination of breaks where this will suit lactation.
- Communicate clearly the changes to your lactation needs as your baby becomes older with the Nominated Supervisor.

Facilities

- Collaboratively agree on the best location for breastfeeding or expressing given the service facilities and access to nearby facilities.
- Provide your own expressing and sterilising equipment and storage containers.
- Take all appropriate measures to protect your own health and the health of others.
- Securely store expressed milk in sealed, clearly labelled containers in the agreed fridge/freezer.

Educators and Other Team Members will:

- Be proactive in fulfilling the requirements of this service policy and related legislative requirements.
- Seek further guidance where required to fulfil your requirements.
- Report any concerns or non-compliance immediately to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Participate in the review of documents and provide constructive feedback to the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider.
- Support co-workers returning to work to balance breastfeeding and expressing of milk with their working hours.
- Be respectful of each employee's privacy and take all reasonable steps to ensure the safe storage of breastmilk at the service, particularly where it is in a shared location.

Communication

- Educators and families will have access to this policy at all times.
- Information will be included in induction for new educator and be included in service handbooks
- Educators and families will be provided with opportunities to be involved in the review of this policy.
- Educators and families will be provided with information from this policy at the time of employment and orientation.
- Changes to this policy and procedure document will be shared with families and educators.

Enforcement

The failure of any person to comply with this policy in its entirety may lead to:

- Termination or modification of child enrolment
- Restriction of access to the service
- Performance management of an employee which may lead to termination

Related Policies and Forms

- Pregnancy and CMV Policy and Procedure

Legislation, Recognised Authorities and Sources

- *"Returning to work from parental leave"* Fair Work Ombudsman Australian Government (accessed on-line Feb 2025) <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/leave/parental-leave/after-parental-leave/returning-to-work-from-parental-leave>
- *"Breastfeeding: mums returning to work"* Raising Children (accessed on-line Feb 2025) <https://raisingchildren.net.au/newborns/breastfeeding-bottle-feeding/expressing-working-travelling/breastfeeding-returning-to-work>
- Australian Breastfeeding Association website (accessed online Feb 2025) <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/workplace/employers>
- *"Commonly asked questions about returning to work and breastfeeding"* Australian Breastfeeding Association (accessed on-line Feb 2025) <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/resources/going-back-work>
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- *"Guide to the National Quality Framework"* Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority Jan 2025
- National Quality Standards
 - QA4 Staffing Arrangements

Review Information

<i>Dates of Revisions:</i>
May 2021, March 2022, March 2023, Feb 2024, Feb 2025
<i>Changes in this revision:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes to quotes in Background due to website updates.• Updated sources and references

I _____ have been provided with this policy and the opportunity to ask questions. I have read and understand my responsibilities under this policy and procedure. I will ensure I ask questions if I am unsure. I also understand the importance of supporting other educators and families in fulfilling their responsibilities. I will seek support from my supervisor if needed to comply.

Signed: _____

Date: _____