

Family-Friendly



Why This is Important

Family-friendly workplaces are fundamental to the well-being of employees and their families. They support healthy community objectives such as age-friendly environments, thriving children and economic stability for families.

Family-friendly policies and practices are also wins for employers by reducing costs associated with turnover through employee retention and supporting recruitment efforts. While there are many types of family-friendly policies and practices, we focus on two specific categories here – breastfeeding-friendly workplaces and support for caregivers and parents.

How to Support This Outcome

Become a breastfeeding-friendly workplace.

Active support from the worksite and management is essential for an employee's successful transition back to the workplace. Employers also benefit significantly from supporting lactating employees through decreased employee turnover, and reduced absenteeism and health care costs.

Support caregivers and parents.

The majority of people will participate in caregiving at some point, either in caring for their own children, spouse, or other family members. Supporting employees who are caregivers or parents has benefits beyond employee wellness. Family-friendly work policies have been recognized as a core approach to preventing child abuse and neglect (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention). Policies and practices that support caregivers can promote gender equality. They also support healthy aging.

Education and Awareness:

- Understand the laws protecting an employee's right to express milk in the workplace or university.
- Apply for Breastfeeding Friendly Employer Project recognition.
- Share community resources for older adult care or provide discounts for older adult care.
- Share resources, make referrals, or provide discounts for childcare.
- Provide educational opportunities on family-related topics, such as parenting, older adult care, emotional support for caregivers.

- Translate resources and work with organizations that support Black, Indigenous and people of color in Vermont to provide culturally appropriate education and support.
- Provide lactation education through flyers, classes, or other venues.

Behavior Change:

- Invite family members to organizational events.
- Inform all staff of the lactation support policy and provide training for supervisors.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Develop a written policy of support for lactating employees.
- Provide a clean, private space (that is not a bathroom) for expressing milk.
- Identify a multi-use room that can be scheduled for milk expression breaks or identify a dedicated lactation room.
- Provide adequate time for lactating employees to express milk in a private space free from intrusion.
- Make arrangements with local childcare centers to reserve spots for employees' children.
- Allow flextime for caregiving and childcare needs.
- Allow employees to telework.
- Ensure managers are trained to support employees.
- Consider an Infants in the Workplace policy for positions that allow it.
- Ensure leave policies support the caregiving needs of employees, for example:
 - Offer paid parental leave for new parents.
 - Offer family medical leave to care for family members.
 - Offer a set number of days for emergency leave for medical or other emergencies.
 - Allow the use of paid sick leave for family care.
- Make sure leave policies are clearly explained in new employee orientation and all employees know how to apply for leave.
- Provide support for filling out forms when needed. Employees that are English Language Learners or have a disability may need support.
- Offer on-site childcare.
- Allow children at the worksite.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Policy should include provisions to provide for milk expression breaks or provide flextime for hybrid and remote workers.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Employers of all sizes can establish a breastfeeding friendly workplace. Most essential is a policy to support lactating employees and to train supervisors and staff regarding the laws and accommodations needed for lactating employees. Creative solutions can be found in many industries.

Where to Go for Resources

- Breastfeeding-Friendly Employer Project:
[HealthVermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness/promote-family-friendly-workplace](https://www.healthvermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness/promote-family-friendly-workplace)
- For caregivers:
 - Let's Grow Kids: [LetsGrowKids.org](https://www.LetsGrowKids.org)
 - Child Care Resources for Families (for employees who need help finding and paying for child care):
[LetsGrowKids.org/client_media/files/CC%20Resources%20for%20Families.pdf](https://www.LetsGrowKids.org/client_media/files/CC%20Resources%20for%20Families.pdf)
 - Explore community-based adult day services: [VermontAdultDay.org](https://www.VermontAdultDay.org)
 - AARP: [aarp.org/work/employers/caregiving-resources/](https://www.aarp.org/work/employers/caregiving-resources/)
- For Employers:
 - Supporting Nursing Moms at Work: Employer Solutions:
[WomensHealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work/resources](https://www.WomensHealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work/resources)
 - Child Care Benefits for Employers: [LetsGrowKids.org/child-care-benefits](https://www.LetsGrowKids.org/child-care-benefits)
- For Employees:
 - Breastfeeding at Home, at Work, and in Public:
[WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public](https://www.WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public)
 - Pumping and Milk Storage:
[WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/pumping-and-storing-breastmilk](https://www.WomensHealth.gov/breastfeeding/pumping-and-storing-breastmilk)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you:
[HealthVermont.gov/local](https://www.healthvermont.gov/local)

See the sample lactation policy in section 3