



australian
breastfeeding
association

Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Accreditation Information Booklet

Australian Breastfeeding Association

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The primary aim of the Australian Breastfeeding Association is to support and encourage women who choose to breastfeed. In response to the increasing number of women returning to work shortly after the birth of their baby, the Association has developed Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Accreditation to assist employers, unions and governments to provide facilities and formulate policies to support breastfeeding women in the workplace.

What Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Accreditation Provides

1. Resources from the Australian Breastfeeding Association to provide employees with breastfeeding information, including an employer subscription to the Association's magazine, *Essence*
2. Information for the workplace to develop their own personalised information pack to give to employees going on maternity leave, or access to the Australian Breastfeeding Association "Come Back Pack"
3. Access to information from Australia's leading source of breastfeeding resources and support
4. Heightened awareness within the workplace of the importance of breastfeeding and therefore the positive spin-offs that breastfeeding provides in the longer term
5. The increased opportunity to attract and retain female employees and thereby reduce on-going training and recruitment costs
6. Recognition of supportive workplace policies and practices

Policies To Improve The Workplace For Breastfeeding Mothers

The individual needs of each employee could vary according to the age of the baby. However, there are four main requirements for women to successfully combine breastfeeding and work:

1. **LACTATION BREAKS** enable the mother to either express breastmilk or go to feed her baby.
 - ❖ The *International Labour Organization* recommends one or more daily breaks or a daily reduction of hours of work, counted as working time and remunerated accordingly.
 - ❖ The **flexibility** of adding these breaks to the lunch break would allow the mother to travel to breastfeed her baby.
2. **FACILITIES** needed include:
 - ❖ a clean, hygienic and private area in which women could express breastmilk or breastfeed their babies if the baby was brought to the workplace. Issues of Occupational Health and Safety may arise if the baby is brought to the workplace. These issues would be a matter for negotiation between employer and employee.
 - ❖ somewhere to store breastmilk and related equipment. A refrigerator/freezer, a sink and storage facilities would need to be available.
3. **FLEXIBLE WORK OPTIONS** could include telecommuting, job sharing, permanent part-time and flexible starting and finishing times around core working hours.
4. **SUPPORT FROM EMPLOYERS AND COLLEAGUES** for the above policies is crucial to improving the workplace for breastfeeding mothers. Employers could provide information about such policies at the time maternity leave is requested rather than at the time of return to work from leave. **This would alleviate employee worry/anxiety and encourage plans to return to work.**

The issue of **PROXIMITY OF CHILD CARE** should also be noted. If child care is reasonably close to the place of work, it will be easier for the mother to go to the baby or have the baby brought to her. Work-based child care, employer sponsored child care and assistance with finding nearby child care are options to be considered by employers.

Who Benefits From Policies Which Support Breastfeeding?

EMPLOYERS:

- ❖ Low cost intervention that supports a family friendly work culture.
- ❖ Improved retention of female employees after maternity leave thereby ensuring that the employer does not lose the valuable skills and experience of the employee.
- ❖ Earlier return to work by some mothers.
- ❖ Reduced absenteeism and staff turnover because of improved health of child.
- ❖ Easier return to work transition for women returning from maternity leave.
- ❖ Acknowledging the needs of employees who are breastfeeding will improve employer-employee relations. It is likely that relations will be more harmonious, that employees will have a greater loyalty and respect for their employer and therefore there will be benefits from enhanced morale and productivity.

FAMILIES:

- ❖ Parents are less likely to need to take time off to care for a sick child since breastfed babies are less likely to become ill and thus be excluded from child care¹.
- ❖ Less inconvenience/stress due to sick children.
- ❖ Breastmilk is free and does not add to the financial burden for families.

MOTHERS:

- ❖ Able to maintain a unique physical and emotional bond with their baby while working outside the home.
- ❖ Mothers often report a feeling of personal satisfaction and pleasure in the commitment they make to their baby and to their job.
- ❖ Reduced risk of developing osteoporosis and ovarian and breast cancer in later life².

BABIES:

- ❖ The health benefits of breastfeeding to the baby have been widely documented. The World Health Organization and Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council recommend that babies should be exclusively breastfed for 6 months^{3,4}. In industrial societies, breastfeeding protects infants from a wide range of illnesses including gastro-intestinal, respiratory tract and middle ear infections.

It prevents some disease in older children and adults such as diabetes mellitus, inflammatory bowel disease and lymphomas, and may play a role in the prevention of obesity and allergies^{4,5}.

GOVERNMENTS:

- ❖ Promoting breastfeeding is a preventative health policy, to which Australian governments are committed, that will result in reduced health care costs in the long term.
- ❖ Breastfeeding is environmentally friendly and imposes no costs on the environment in terms of production, packaging, transportation or waste disposal.

REFERENCES

- 1 Jones EG, Matheny RJ 1993, Relationship between infant feeding and exclusion rate from child care because of illness. *J Am Diet Assn* 93(7): 809-811.
- 2 Brodribb W(Ed.) 2004, *Breastfeeding Management*; Australian Breastfeeding Association, Melbourne.
- 3 World Health Organization 2001, Infant and young child nutrition. Fifty Fourth World Health Assembly. Resolution 54.2, 18 May 2001 World Health Organization, Geneva.
- 4 National Health and Medical Research Council 2003, Food for Health Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia. NHMRC Cat No 0326111 , Canberra.
- 5 American Academy of Paediatrics 1997, Breastfeeding and Use of Human Milk. *Pediatrics* 100 (6): 1035-1039.

Gaining Workplace Breastfeeding Accreditation

To gain "Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Accreditation" an application to the Australian Breastfeeding Association (see enclosed form) and the payment of an annual fee is required. To be successfully accredited, a site evaluation will be completed by the Australian Breastfeeding Association, and a re-evaluation will occur every two years. In the alternate year, a simple questionnaire must be completed to ensure requirements are still being met.

Employee Information Regarding Breastfeeding

Information about breastfeeding is generally not fully appreciated until after the birth of a child. However, for the workplace, the benefits of the mother breastfeeding are numerous and the following may be a useful addition to the information you provide your employees.

You may wish to develop your own information pack

When employees signal their intention to apply for maternity leave, they are likely to want not only information about their leave provisions, but also about how they can incorporate the responsibilities of work and motherhood once they return from maternity leave. The organisation can assist in the transition of this process by providing information that will make the move back to work beneficial for both the mother and the workplace.

The information that a mother will be seeking could include flexible working arrangements, child care if offered by the organization, facilities provided for expressing breastmilk and policies on sick leave etc.

Apart from expressing breastmilk, there are a range of options open to an employee who is breastfeeding, including:

- ⇒ breastfeeding at work
- ⇒ having her child in care nearby or working from home
- ⇒ supplementing her child when she cannot be present and breastfeeding the rest of the time

Other information that would be beneficial to the employee includes the knowledge that the workplace is accredited by the Australian Breastfeeding Association as a breastfeeding friendly environment and easy access to additional breastfeeding information.

Accreditation Fees

The Australian Breastfeeding Association is a not-for-profit organization – See www.breastfeeding.asn.au

The accreditation fee covers the cost of the provision of resources and the expertise of our personnel involved in the workplace assessment.

The fee is on a sliding scale depending on the number of employees and consists of an initial accreditation fee and subsequent yearly fee. Reaccreditation fees are set at 20 per cent of the current accreditation fee.

What You Receive When You Are Accredited

- ⇒ A Certificate of Accreditation
- ⇒ A Resource Pack to enable you to develop a personalized information pack for your employees who request maternity leave, or access to the Australian Breastfeeding Association “Come Back Pack”
- ⇒ A subscription to the Australian Breastfeeding Association’s bimonthly magazine, *Essence*
- ⇒ Inclusion on the Australian Breastfeeding Association’s website list of Breastfeeding Friendly accredited workplaces
- ⇒ Reaccreditation by a questionnaire after 12 months and by a workplace assessment in alternate years
- ⇒ An updated pack of resources annually (Some of the brochure contents may vary depending on availability).

WORKPLACE STATUS	DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED*	INITIAL ACCREDITATION FEE	SUBSEQUENT YEARLY FEE
Under 100 staff		\$300	\$60
Up to 200		\$600	\$120
200-1000		\$1000	\$200
Over 1000		\$1500	\$300
NOT FOR PROFIT			
Income Tax Exempt Charity (ITEC) only	Nil	Normal fees	Normal reaccreditation fees
ITEC / Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR)	DGR printout from ABR	Concessional fee**	Concessional reaccreditation fees**
Public Benevolent Institution (PBI)	ATO FBT exemption – from ATO or payroll manager	Nil	Nil

* All applications should be accompanied by a statement outlining the number of staff in the workplace(s) to be accredited

** Concessional fee is the equivalent of the BFWA fee for under 100 staff

Explanation

BFWA fees are set by the Australian Breastfeeding Association's Business Management Team. Not-for-profit organisations may apply for fee free or concessional accreditation on the basis of their status in relation to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO):

Income Tax Exempt Charities (ITECs)

ITECs are set out in Division 50 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (ITAA97) and must be endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office. ITECs include charitable, religious, scientific and public educational institutions, employer and employee associations, unions, friendly societies, municipal corporations, public authorities, public hospitals, private not-for-profit hospitals, and societies or associations established for promoting Australian resources and tourism and art, literature and sporting societies, clubs and associations.

Deductible Gift Recipients (DGRs)

DGRs are a subcategory of ITECs and must be endorsed as DGRs by the ATO such that their status is easily checked on the Australian Business Register. DGRs include public hospitals, private not-for-profit hospitals, public libraries, museums, art galleries, public authorities or institutions engaged in medical research, funds, authorities and institutions for various purposes including educational, sports and recreational, international affairs, industry, the environment, research, welfare and rights

Public Benevolent Institution (PBIs)

A PBI is an organisation that is a non-profit body; is carried on without the purpose of private gain for particular persons; is established and carried on predominantly for the direct relief of poverty, sickness, suffering, distress, misfortune, destitution or helplessness; and acts to relieve conditions or misfortunes that arouse pity or compassion in the community. All PBIs can be identified by their entitlement to a Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) exemption under the Fringe Benefit Assessment Act 1986. This status is documented by the ATO or could be provided in a letter from a payroll manager.

NB - the ABA Board retains the right to waive fees on applications where this has been sought by an organisation and the reasons provided are deemed to warrant this.

Australian Breastfeeding Association—Information & Services

The Australian Breastfeeding Association is willing to liaise with individual employers, governments and unions in developing appropriate policies to support the needs of breastfeeding mothers.

This information sheet is only the beginning of the support and information which the Australian Breastfeeding Association has to offer. Some relevant Australian Breastfeeding Association services include:

- ❖ Seven-day-a-week telephone and e-mail counselling
- ❖ Hire of electric breast pumps
- ❖ Group discussions on topics relevant to working women
- ❖ Talks to groups by counsellors or community educators
- ❖ Workplace seminars
- ❖ Seminars for women planning to combine breastfeeding and paid work
- ❖ Sale of booklets, posters, lactation and mothering aids
- ❖ Access to the experiences of other women through case studies in the magazine, *Essence* and booklets.

Why do women need to learn about breastfeeding before they have their babies?

Breastfeeding, while natural, is still a learned skill for both mother and baby. Like childbirth, it helps women to learn as much as they can before the birth.

An Australian Breastfeeding Association subscription will help prepare them for this new experience.

How does being an Australian Breastfeeding Association subscriber help?

Women who become a part of the Australia-wide support network are more likely to successfully establish breastfeeding and enjoy their breastfeeding experience. Mothers who return to paid work find the ongoing contact and support especially helpful.

A subscription offers:

- ❖ Help & support with breastfeeding from our trained breastfeeding counsellors
- ❖ Contact with other mothers through Australia-wide groups and web site discussion boards
- ❖ Bi-monthly *Essence* magazine
- ❖ Information about how to return to work and continue breastfeeding
- ❖ Discounted breast pump hire:-
Hire per week. Subscribers from \$10.00; Non-subscribers \$20.00; Deposit required.
- ❖ Shop-at-home catalogue of breastfeeding and parenting products, including our booklets. Discount on all products from Mothers Direct, the retail arm of the association. www.mothersdirect.com.au

These include the following relevant products:-

Breastfeeding, Women and Work booklet \$5.00 * (incl. GST)

Expressing and Storing Breastmilk booklet \$5.00 * (incl. GST)

Breastfeeding books—eg *Breastfeeding...naturally* ed Jill Day, 2004 \$34.95 * (incl. GST)

- ❖ Plus postage & handling where applicable. Prices subject to change.

If you would like further information about the Australian Breastfeeding Association please contact :-

Australian Breastfeeding Association 1818-1822 Malvern Road, EAST MALVERN, VIC 3145
(PO Box 4000 Glen Iris, VIC 3146) Tel: 03 9885 0855 or Fax: 03 9885 0866
info@breastfeeding.asn.au Website: **www.breastfeeding.asn.au**

Mothers Direct 03 9886 9399 9.00—5.00 Monday to Friday

Australian Breastfeeding Association

Sample Breastfeeding Policy Statement for Workplaces

(Name of organization)..... recognizes the importance of breastfeeding for both the mother and baby. We aim to provide a family friendly workplace that enables mothers to balance breastfeeding and their work responsibilities whilst supporting, promoting and protecting breastfeeding by providing facilities and support.

The increasing trend of mothers to breastfeed and with increasing numbers of mothers with young babies returning to work means that there is a need to ensure that work and breastfeeding can be combined comfortably and practically. When an employer actively supports women in maintaining their preferred way to nourish/feed their baby, there are ongoing benefits to the baby, the mother and the employer.

(Name of organization)..... will provide the following facilities and support:

- ❖ Lactation Breaks: The number of times women need to feed or express milk will be determined by the individual needs and the age of the baby. The younger the baby, the more frequently a mother is likely to need to do so. The International Labour Organisation recommends one or more daily breaks or a daily reduction of hours of work, counted as working time and remunerated accordingly. These will need to be negotiated between the mother and her supervisor, this will enable the mother to either express breastmilk, go to feed her baby or have the baby brought to her.
- ❖ Flexible Work Options: A mother (or her employee representative) can negotiate flexible work options (such as flexi-time, part-time, home-based work) with her supervisor whilst taking into account both the employee's and organisation's needs.
- ❖ Facilities: A clean, private room with a power point, lockable door, comfortable chair, refrigerator, hand washing facilities and breastpump storage area.
- ❖ Breastfeeding Resources: Employees who are pregnant or considering pregnancy will be provided with information about this policy and about balancing breastfeeding and work. Information, resources and other relevant contacts will be easily viewed and accessed by all employees.
- ❖ Support Provided: The Australian Breastfeeding Association is Australia's leading source of breastfeeding information and support. We will provide literature and refer mothers to the association at the time they apply for maternity leave, to enable mothers to build a network of support and information from up-to-date research findings and the practical experiences of many mothers.
- ❖ Informing Staff: All staff or prospective staff are informed of this policy.

Employer.....

Date.....