

8 | Tools for Employers



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The following tools will help employers assess the need for a workplace breastfeeding program, plan a program, communicate the program to employees, and obtain feedback about the value of the program. Needs assessment and evaluation tools can assist in the creation of a comprehensive breastfeeding policy and provide a typical timeline for implementing a breastfeeding program. Communication tools are helpful in promoting your new or existing breastfeeding program and its benefits. These promotional materials can be used in newsletters, on bulletin boards, and in break areas.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION TOOLS

- Policy for Supporting Breastfeeding Employees
- Timeline for Implementing a Lactation Support Program
- Lactation Program Assessment Form
- Lactation Support Program Feedback Form for Supervisors and Colleagues
- Lactation Support Program Feedback Form for Breastfeeding Employees

COMMUNICATIONS MATERIALS

- Talking Points for Human Resources and Benefits Directors
- Drop-In Newsletter Communications

POLICY FOR SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING EMPLOYEES

In recognition of the well-documented health advantages of breastfeeding for infants and mothers, [name of company] provides a supportive environment to enable breastfeeding employees to express their milk during work hours. This includes a company-wide lactation support program administered by [name of department].

[Name of company] subscribes to the following work site support policy. This policy shall be communicated to all current employees and included in new employee orientation training.

COMPANY RESPONSIBILITIES

Breastfeeding employees who choose to continue providing their milk for their infants after returning to work shall receive:

■ Milk Expression Breaks

Breastfeeding employees are allowed to breastfeed or express milk during work hours using their normal breaks and meal times. For time that may be needed beyond the usual break times, employees may use personal leave or may make up the time as negotiated with their supervisors.

■ A Place to Express Milk

A private room (not a restroom) shall be available for employees to breastfeed or express milk. The room will be private and sanitary, located near a sink with running water for washing hands and rinsing out breast pump parts, and have an electrical outlet. If employees prefer, they may also breastfeed or express milk in their own private office, or in other comfortable locations agreed upon in consultation with the employee's supervisor. Expressed milk can be stored [*in general company refrigerators/in designated refrigerators provided in the lactation room or other location/in employee's personal cooler*].

■ Breastfeeding Equipment

[Name of company] [*provides/subsidizes/rents*] electric breast pumps to assist breastfeeding employees with milk expression during work hours. The company provides [*a hospital grade pump that can be used by more than one employee and/or a portable personal use electric breast pump that the employee retains*] throughout the time the employee is breastfeeding. [*If using a standard hospital-grade pump, indicate whether the company provides/subsidizes a personal attachment kit or where the employee can purchase the kit.*] [*Indicate whether breast pumps are also available for partners of male employees.*]

■ Education

Prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding classes and informational materials are available for all mothers and fathers, as well as their partners.

■ Staff Support

Supervisors and managers are responsible for alerting pregnant and breastfeeding employees to the company's work site lactation support program and for negotiating policies and practices that will help facilitate each employee's infant feeding goals. It is expected that all employees will assist in providing a positive atmosphere of support for breastfeeding employees.

[List other components specific to your company's program]

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

■ Communication with Supervisors

Employees who wish to express milk during the work period shall keep supervisors and managers informed of their needs so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the company.

■ Maintenance of Milk Expression Areas

Breastfeeding employees are responsible for keeping milk expression areas clean, using anti-microbial wipes to clean the pump and area around it. Employees are also responsible for keeping the general lactation room clean for the next user. This responsibility extends to both designated milk expression areas and other areas where milk may be expressed.

■ Milk Storage

Employees should label all milk expressed with their name and date collected so it is not inadvertently confused with another employee's milk. Each employee is responsible for proper storage of her milk using *[company provided refrigerator/personal storage coolers]*.

■ Use of Break Times to Express Milk

When more than one breastfeeding employee needs to use the designated lactation room, employees can use the sign-in log provided in the room to negotiate milk expression times that are most convenient or best meet their needs.

TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTING A LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

Note: The actual time frame for implementing a lactation support program varies, and can be much shorter or longer depending on the size of the company and other internal or external factors. The steps of this process, however, are applicable to most companies.

MONTH 1

Initial Program Planning

- Review existing research about the value of a lactation support program.
- Talk to other employers who have implemented successful lactation programs.
- Identify potential stakeholders within the company and initiate dialogue about the program.
- Contact community resources to identify options for
 - Consultation in establishing the corporate program;
 - Formal and informal education for employees;
 - Direct lactation assistance for breastfeeding employees; and
 - Acquisition of breast pump equipment.

MONTH 2

Research

- Examine any company data related to employee absenteeism and turnover rates, numbers of female workers of childbearing age, maternity leave policies, etc.
- Identify employee needs and environmental constraints to breastfeeding within the company (either through a formal needs assessment or through dialogue with pregnant employees and women who are currently or were previously breastfeeding).

MONTH 3

Strategy Planning

- Convene a stakeholders' meeting with representatives from diverse departments to discuss the results of the data collection process and review options for
 - Milk expression break policies;
 - Constructing, renovating, or converting a designated space in the office into one or more lactation rooms;
 - Breast pump equipment;
 - Storage and handling of human milk; and
 - Gaining buy-in from other employees.
- Establish a mechanism for gathering baseline data that can later be used as a comparison for tracking program success.

MONTH 4

Program Development

- Present the program strategy to management and appropriate departments to gain approvals and buy-in.
- Assign a task force to begin program development.
- Begin development of a company-wide breastfeeding support policy.
- Process contracts and purchase orders required for program components, including
 - Facilities contractors;
 - Breast pumps;
 - Amenities for the lactation room;
 - Lactation consultation services; and
 - Educational and promotional materials.
- Complete the physical improvements needed for a lactation room.

MONTHS 4-5

Program Implementation

- Plan a coordinated approach to announce and promote the program.
- Inform department heads, managers and supervisors about the program.
- Conduct a brief training orientation about the program with current employees.

ONGOING

Program Tracking and Evaluation

- Establish a feedback system for breastfeeding employees, co-workers, and supervisors in order to gather ongoing input to help streamline the program.
- Communicate with supervisors and managers regarding the impact of the program.
- Review company absenteeism and turnover rates periodically to track the potential impact of the program.

EMPLOYER LACTATION PROGRAM ASSESSMENT FORM

HUMAN RESOURCES	
Number of employed women of childbearing age (16-44)	
Percent of female employees employed full-time	
Number of male employees ages 16-44	
Number of pregnancies among employees annually	
Breastfeeding rates of employees (if known)	
Current turnover rate among women who take maternity leave	
Current rates of absenteeism among new mothers and fathers	
COMPANY POLICIES	
What existing policies provide support services for breastfeeding employees?	
What is the company's maternity leave policy? Does the company provide FMLA or disability insurance for maternity leave?	
What policies allow for a gradual return to work following maternity leave? <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time employment <input type="checkbox"/> Job-sharing <input type="checkbox"/> Telecommuting <input type="checkbox"/> Flextime <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
What break policies could be adapted to allow for milk expression breaks?	
What new policies would need to be developed to provide for lactation support?	

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

What department could likely serve as the administrative home for the lactation support program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Wellness division <input type="checkbox"/> Employee health unit <input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources <input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
What funding is available to support a lactation support program?	
What realistic options do women currently have for expressing milk in privacy during the work period (other than a restroom)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal office <input type="checkbox"/> Office of another employee <input type="checkbox"/> Designated lactation room <input type="checkbox"/> Other space
If no designated lactation room exists, what options might be available for a space with an electrical outlet that can be locked?	<input type="checkbox"/> Unused office space <input type="checkbox"/> Closet or other small space <input type="checkbox"/> A room created within another space <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
What type of breast pump equipment do breastfeeding employees currently receive?	<input type="checkbox"/> None—employees use their own breast pump equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Company purchases hospital-grade electric breast pumps <input type="checkbox"/> Company rents hospital-grade electric breast pumps <input type="checkbox"/> Company provides/subsidizes portable personal use pumps
Where do employees currently store breast milk that they express during work hours?	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee-provided cooler pack <input type="checkbox"/> Company-provided cooler pack <input type="checkbox"/> Small refrigerator designated for breast milk storage <input type="checkbox"/> Public shared refrigerator <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown
What educational materials are currently available for pregnant and breastfeeding employees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal/postpartum classes <input type="checkbox"/> Pamphlets <input type="checkbox"/> Books <input type="checkbox"/> Videos <input type="checkbox"/> Company website <input type="checkbox"/> Information about community resources <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
What community resources are available to assist in developing a lactation support program and/or to provide direct services to breastfeeding employees?	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospital or private clinic nurses <input type="checkbox"/> Lactation consultants at the hospital or in private practice <input type="checkbox"/> La Leche League group <input type="checkbox"/> Local breastfeeding coalition <input type="checkbox"/> Other groups
What in-house promotion options are available?	<input type="checkbox"/> Company newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Memos/e-mails <input type="checkbox"/> Company website <input type="checkbox"/> Employee health fair <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM FEEDBACK FORM

For Supervisors and Colleagues of Breastfeeding Employees

As you know, the company provides a lactation support program to assist breastfeeding employees with providing their milk to their infants. We value your feedback on ways the program can continue to improve to meet the needs of all employees.

How many colleagues or employees under your supervision are you aware of who are currently participating in the company lactation support program? _____

Have you attended an employee orientation or training event on the program? yes no

How do you feel the following lactation program components have impacted the breastfeeding employee(s)?

PROGRAM COMPONENTS	Positive Impact 3	No Impact Observed 2	Negative Impact 1
Availability of a lactation room for milk expression			
Opportunity to breastfeed baby at work			
Flexible breaks for milk expression			
Flexible return to work policy (ex: part-time, job sharing, telecommuting, flex-time, etc.)			
Work site education opportunities such as prenatal classes and monthly support groups			
Other: _____			

How do you feel these same components impact the operation of your department?

PROGRAM COMPONENTS	Positive Impact 3	No Impact Observed 2	Negative Impact 1
Availability of a lactation room for milk expression			
Opportunity to breastfeed baby at work			
Flexible breaks for milk expression			
Flexible return to work policy (ex: part-time, job sharing, telecommuting, flex-time, etc.)			
Work site education opportunities such as prenatal classes and monthly support groups			
Other: _____			

Please describe what you feel works BEST about the company's lactation support program.

Please describe what may NOT be working well about the company's lactation support program.

What suggestions or ideas do you feel would help improve the program?

Other comments:

Name (*Optional*) _____

Position/Title (*Optional*) _____

Department (*Optional*) _____

LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM FEEDBACK FORM

For Breastfeeding Employees

Thank you for Participating in our Company Lactation Support Program!

Congratulations on continuing to breastfeed after your return to work! Please take just a few moments to complete this lactation support program feedback form to provide us with your suggestions on ways we can continue to improve services to breastfeeding employees. We urge you to continue to spread the news about the program to your pregnant and breastfeeding colleagues, as well.

How old was your baby when you returned to work? _____ months weeks

How long did you express milk at work for your infant? _____ months weeks

How long did you breastfeed or provide your milk for your infant?

_____ years months weeks

How old was your baby when you first introduced formula or drinks other than breast milk?

_____ months weeks days

How valuable were lactation program services to helping you meet your infant feeding goals? On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being “Extremely Valuable” and 1 being “Did not Participate.”

	Extremely Valuable 5	Valuable 4	Somewhat Helpful 3	Not Helpful 2	Did not Participate 1
MILK EXPRESSION ROOM					
Company-designated lactation room					
Private office					
Other location: (please indicate) _____					
Breastfed baby at work					

	Extremely Valuable 5	Valuable 4	Somewhat Helpful 3	Not Helpful 2	Did not Participate 1
MILK STORAGE					
Company-designated refrigerator					
Public shared refrigerator					
Personal Cooler					

	Extremely Valuable 5	Valuable 4	Somewhat Helpful 3	Not Helpful 2	Did not Participate 1
BREAST PUMP EQUIPMENT					
Company-provided or -subsidized breast pump					
Personal breast pump at home or work					

	Extremely Valuable 5	Valuable 4	Somewhat Helpful 3	Not Helpful 2	Did not Participate 1
EDUCATION					
Prenatal breastfeeding class taught at work					
Pamphlets and videos provided by company					
“Back to work” class before or after returning to work					
Access to company-provided lactation consultant or health professional for personal lactation assistance					

	Extremely Valuable 5	Valuable 4	Somewhat Helpful 3	Not Helpful 2	Did not Participate 1
SUPPORT					
Support from supervisor					
Support from colleagues					
Mother-to-mother support group					

Which lactation support services did you find most helpful?

What worksite challenges made it more difficult to reach your infant feeding goals?

What recommendations do you feel the company should consider to further improve the program?

If you marked “Did not Participate” for any of the answers above, please indicate your reason(s) for not participating:

Other comments:

Name (*Optional*) _____

Position/Title (*Optional*) _____

Department (*Optional*) _____

CORPORATIONS & LACTATION SUPPORT

TALKING POINTS FOR HUMAN RESOURCES AND BENEFITS DIRECTORS

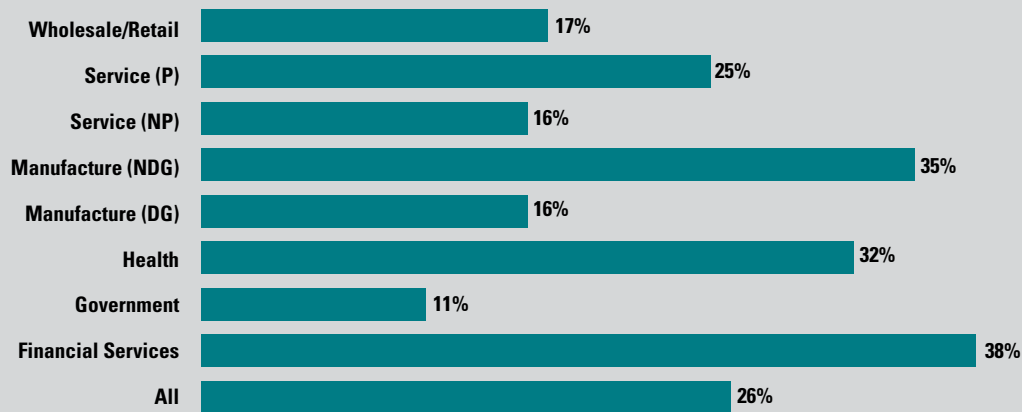
WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

- Mothers are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. workforce.¹
- In the past 20 years, the percentage of new mothers in the workforce has increased by more than 80% (current level 60%).²

BREASTFEEDING & WORKING MOTHERS

- Working outside the home negatively affects initiation and duration of breastfeeding.¹
- 1/3 of working mothers return to work within 3 months of the birth of their child and 2/3 return within 6 months.¹
 - Only 18% of employers offer paid maternity leave (other than short-term disability).³

Lactation Program Benefits By Industry



Source: Society for Human Resource Management. *2007 Benefits Survey Report*. Available at: <http://www.shrm.org>. Accessed April 17, 2008.

BREASTFEEDING BENEFITS

Lower short-term risk of:⁴

CHILD

- Ear infections
- Respiratory infections
- Dermatitis
- Gastrointestinal disorders

MOTHER

- Weight gain
- Maternal postpartum depression

Lower long-term risk of:⁴

CHILD

- Asthma (young children)
- Obesity
- Type 1 and 2 Diabetes

MOTHER

- Cancers (breast, ovarian, endometrial)
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Osteoporosis

BREASTFEEDING PROGRAM BENEFITS

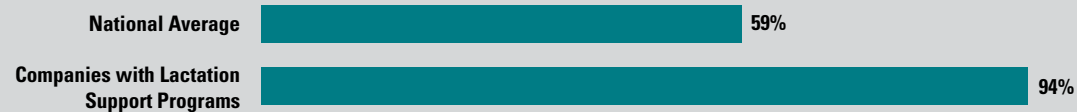
- Improves retention.
- Mitigates lost productivity / absenteeism.
 - One-day absences to care for sick children occur twice as often for mothers of formula-fed infants.⁶
 - Earlier return from maternity leave.
- Higher employee loyalty.
- Recognition as a “family friendly” business.

Lower Health Care Costs

- Health insurance studies have documented that infants who are exclusively breastfed for three months or longer have overall health care costs that are \$300-\$400 less per year than infants who are bottlefed.²
- CIGNA reported in a two-year study of 343 employees an annual savings of \$240,000 in health care expenses and \$60,000 in reduced absenteeism rates, as well as 62% fewer prescriptions.⁷

Retention

Retention Rate for Employees of Companies with Lactation Support Programs



Source: Ortiz J, McGilligan K, Kelly P. Duration of breast milk expression among working mothers enrolled in an employer-sponsored lactation program. *Pediatr Nurs.* 2004 Mar-Apr;30(2):111-9.

Lower Absenteeism & Turnover Rates

- One-day absences to care for sick children occur more than twice as often for mothers of formula-feeding infants.⁶
- A study of multiple companies with lactation support programs found an average retention rate of 94%.⁸

EMPLOYER CASE EXAMPLES

- Aetna estimated that implementing a lactation program saved the company \$1,435 in medical claims per breastfed infant during the first year of life. Total claims savings = \$108,737/ ROI of 3 to 1.⁹
- CIGNA's Working Well Moms Program saw a savings of \$300,000 in annual health care expenses for breastfeeding mothers and their children. The program also reduced absenteeism among breastfeeding mothers.³

BASIC NEEDS OF BREASTFEEDING EMPLOYEES ARE MINIMAL

- Time and space to express milk regularly.
- Support from supervisors and colleagues.
- Information on how to successfully combine breastfeeding with employment.
- Access to health professionals who can assist with breastfeeding questions and concerns.

Employer Support of Gradual Return to the Workplace

BASIC NEEDS

- Gradual phase back into work to allow mother and baby time to adjust to the separation.

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS

- Part-time for a period of time.
- Job sharing.
- Telecommuting.
- Flexible scheduling (e.g., taking off Wednesdays for a period of time).

Private Room for Milk Expression

BASIC NEEDS

- 4'x 5' minimal space.
- Access to nearby running water.
- Electrical outlet.
- Lock on door.
- A restroom is NOT a sanitary place to breastfeed or express milk!

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS

- Private locked office, conference room, or other space.
- Lactation room set up in small office space.
- Construct walls to enclose a small space in a larger room or other area.

Room Amenity Options

- Lock on door.
- Safe, clean environment.
- Chair and shelf or table for breast pump.
- Access to nearby running water.
- Breast pump equipment options:
 - Employee could bring her own.
 - Company could purchase or rent a durable pump that more than one mother can use.
 - Company could provide or subsidize a portable pump designed for working mothers to take to and from work.

Time to Express Milk

BASIC NEEDS

- Two to three 15-20 minute breaks during a typical 8-hour work period (plus time to go to the site).

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS

- Use regular allotted breaks and lunch period.
- Excess time that may be needed can be made up before or after work, as part of lunch period, or at other times negotiated with supervisors.

Milk Storage Options

- Employee could use her own personal cooler.
- Company could provide a small college dorm room-sized refrigerator for the lactation room.
- A public shared refrigerator could be used if desired by mothers and co-workers.

Education

BASIC NEEDS

- Prenatal information on breastfeeding.
- Postpartum assistance in the hospital, at home, and back at work.

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS

- Prenatal and postpartum breastfeeding class.
- Informational materials and videos.
- Company contract with a lactation expert to provide education and assistance.
- Individualized back-to-work consult with the contract lactation expert.
- Referrals to community classes and lactation experts.

Support

BASIC NEEDS

- Support from company managers, supervisors, and co-workers.
- Mother-to-mother support.

FLEXIBLE OPTIONS

- Worksite lactation support policy.
- Training for supervisors and co-workers.
- Mother-to-mother support group.
- Electronic Listservs or company web-based connection network.

BEGINNING A LACTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM IN YOUR COMPANY

- Establish as part of company health benefit services.
- House within the wellness division.
- Convene a task force with key company stakeholders to identify needs and solutions.
- Gain assistance from community resources.
- Promote the program with all employees, supervisors, and co-workers to gain leadership and support.

WHO CAN HELP

- International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs).
- Health professionals from hospitals or doctor's offices.
- Local breastfeeding coalitions.
- La Leche League.
- Community groups such as March of Dimes, Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies, and other local groups.

References

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5. Ball TM, Wright, A. (1999). Health care costs of formula-feeding in the first year of life. *Pediatrics*, 103(4):871-876.
6. Cohen R, Mrtek MB, Mrtek RG. (1995). Comparison of maternal absenteeism and infant illness rates among breastfeeding and formula-feeding women in two corporations. *American J of Health Promotion*, 10(2):148-153.
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8. Ortiz J, McGilligan K, Kelly P. (2004). Duration of breast milk expression among working mothers enrolled in an employer-sponsored lactation program. *Pediatric Nursing*, 30(2):111-119.
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DROP-IN NEWSLETTER COMMUNICATIONS

#1 - INITIAL PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

MERGING MOTHERHOOD AND WORK: NEW LACTATION PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

[*Name of Company*] announces plans to establish a lactation support services program for female employees and partners of male employees who choose to breastfeed their new babies. The program will be established as part of the company's health benefit program.

Lactation support programs are a growing trend in businesses today as a means of improving family services to employees. More than 70% of new mothers now breastfeed their infants because of the proven health benefits to both infants and mothers. Research shows that breastfed infants are significantly less likely to suffer from illnesses, infections and obesity. Mothers who breastfeed also enjoy significant health benefits, including faster recovery from pregnancy and reduced risk of breast cancer and osteoporosis. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants receive nothing but breast milk for the first 6 months of life, and continued breast milk for at least a year or more.

Corporate lactation programs have been proven to help mothers continue to provide their milk for their infants. These programs often include designated lactation rooms for milk expression during work hours, access to efficient breast pump equipment, education programs, and access to health professionals who can assist with questions and concerns.

If you are a pregnant or breastfeeding employee, we invite you to submit your ideas for services that will be most helpful. Any employee who would like to provide input into the process is invited to contact [*name of department/contact person*] with suggestions. A task force will be convened to identify needs, review suggestions, and discuss the best approach for our company. Contact our office if you would like to be a part of this task force.

#2 - PROGRAM LAUNCH ANNOUNCEMENT

NEW LACTATION HEALTH BENEFIT SERVICES ANNOUNCED

[Name of Company] announces the launching of a lactation support program for breastfeeding women who wish to continue providing their milk for their infants after they return from maternity leave.

The lactation support program is part of the company's health benefit services, and was developed following careful planning and review of suggestions from employees. The program includes:

- A designated safe, private area for expressing milk during work hours. The room is located [give location]
- Access to an electric breast pump for quick and efficient milk removal [describe the type of pump and milk collection kit available]
- Educational materials and classes [indicate date, time, and location]
- Monthly support group meeting [indicate date, time and location]
- Access to a lactation consultant for assistance with breastfeeding.

Research shows that supporting breastfeeding employees is a WIN-WIN for everyone. Breastfeeding is recommended by all major medical organizations as the optimal way to feed infants because of its significant health advantages. Breastfeeding is also healthier for mothers—for example, it lowers the risk of breast cancer and speeds recovery from pregnancy. This all translates into positive benefits for companies, including lower health care costs.

[Name of company] is proud to join hundreds of other businesses across America who provide lactation support for their employees. We are pleased that our breastfeeding employees can successfully merge their important priorities of family and work through onsite lactation support, and we urge supervisors and co-workers to lend their support.

#3—EDUCATIONAL EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

MAKING IT WORK: BREASTFEEDING AND WORK CLASSES OFFERED

The [name of department] announces new educational classes on breastfeeding and working for expectant mothers and fathers. The following classes are available:

PREPARING FOR BABY

- How to get a good start with breastfeeding;
- Basic breastfeeding techniques; and
- How to work breastfeeding into your work life.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

BACK TO WORK

- How to use a breast pump;
- Setting up a workable milk expression schedule;
- Storing milk;
- Maintaining a good milk supply; and
- Talking with colleagues and supervisors about your needs.

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Classes are taught by [name of instructor, credentials, and organization] and are open to all expectant or new mothers and fathers. Partners are also welcome to attend. For more information, contact [name of contact/department].