

# A GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

## BREASTFEEDING WORKS!

Sending Your Breastfeeding  
Infant to Child Care in New Jersey



**MONTCLAIR STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

## For many New Jersey families, transitioning their infant into child care isn't easy.

If your baby is breastfeeding, chestfeeding, or being fed human milk, you may have even more questions or concerns.

Families who wish to continue feeding their babies human milk worry about disrupting their child's feeding routines.

*"How can I ensure my baby will be fed properly and safely while I'm away at work or school?"*

*"What will I have to do to continue producing and providing breastmilk for my child at child care?"*

For some, transitioning to child care can feel like losing control of something precious: the feeding of your infant.

The good news is that with a bit of planning and preparation, many NJ families successfully do it!

This guide is designed to help you continue feeding breastmilk to infants and toddlers in child care or early childhood education settings.



It will help you understand how continued breastfeeding works, what your rights and responsibilities are, and best ways to ensure a successful transition back to work or school for you and your baby.

### **STATEMENT OF INCLUSION:**

Parents and caregivers who choose to feed their children human milk represent all sexes, genders, and familial relations. They feed from breasts, chests, bottles, cups, syringes and other methods. For clarity of reading, this guide will use the term "breastfeeding" for all methods of feeding human milk and does not imply one method is superior to another. All families find the best way for them and their children.

# THE BENEFITS FOR YOUR FAMILY

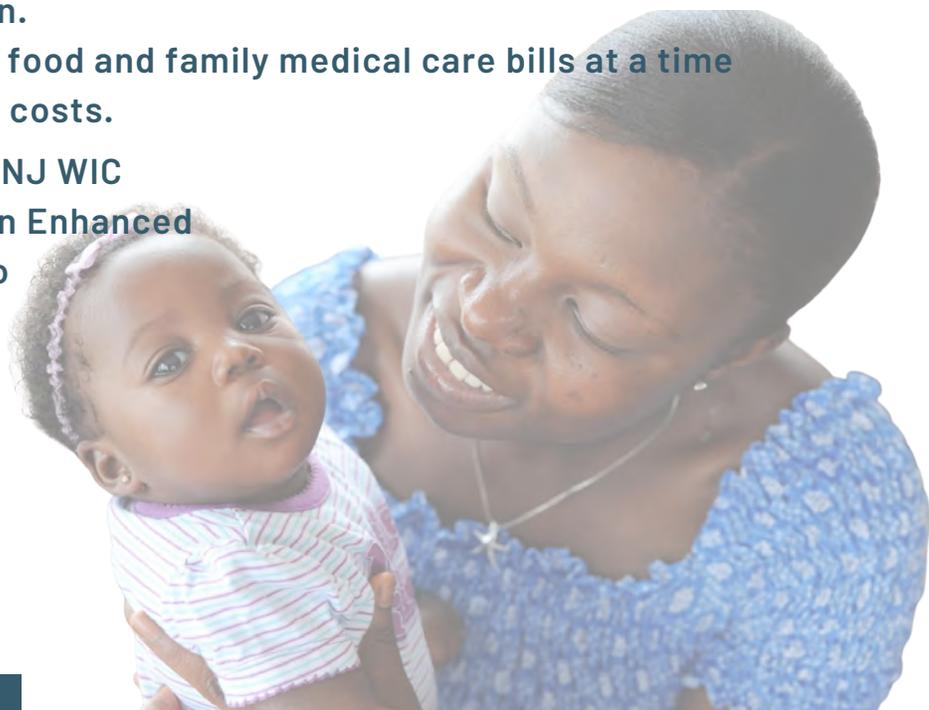
of continuing to feed human milk in child care

## A HEALTHIER BABY

- Breastmilk reduces the chance and severity of illnesses common in child care settings, including colds, ear infections, digestive and respiratory problems.
- Breastmilk may provide some protection against exposure to COVID-19 among unvaccinated babies and infants.<sup>1</sup>
- Around 6 months (the time many infants are in childcare) levels of the immune-boosting benefits of human milk go UP - giving your baby even more protection than before.
- Continued breastmilk means continued developmental benefits to your baby as they learn and grow in child care.

## A SMOOTHER TRANSITION

- Continuing to feed breastmilk minimizes changes to your baby's routine and provides more opportunities for infant-parent bonding and connection - which is essential for *both* parents and babies!
- Breastfeeding continues to reduce the risks of certain types of cancer and postpartum depression.
- Breastfeeding may reduce food and family medical care bills at a time you take on new child care costs.
- Receive 6 extra months of NJ WIC postpartum benefits and an Enhanced Food Package compared to non-breastfed babies.<sup>2</sup>



# #1: Take all the paid family leave you can.

You may be entitled to more than you think.



**YOUR EMPLOYER**

FMLA and the NJ Family Leave Act both entitle certain employees to take "up to" 24 weeks for job-protected leave for the birth parent.



**+ TEMPORARY DISABILITY INSURANCE**

Provides cash benefits for 10-12 weeks (potentially longer for physical or mental health complications) so you can stop working before and after childbirth.



**+ FAMILY LEAVE INSURANCE**

12 continuous weeks (or 56 days/8 weeks of intermittent leave) of cash benefits in the first year. Available to birthing, non-birth, adoptive and foster parents.

[www.myleavebenefits.nj.gov](http://www.myleavebenefits.nj.gov)

**Receive 85% of your average wages,  
up to \$903/week**



Don't miss out on paid time off with your baby! 82% (4 out of 5) of NJ families could receive more cash benefits for paid time off than they actually do.

Visit [www.myleavebenefits.nj.gov](http://www.myleavebenefits.nj.gov) or [CLICK HERE](#) to download a flyer and learn more.

# #2: Know your rights & resources

New Jersey law is on your side if you choose to breastfeed.

**In NJ, it is illegal for employers to discriminate based on breastfeeding status for as long as you breastfeed your baby.**

- It is also unlawful for an employer to harass, make derogatory comments, to interfere with an employee, or permit others to do these things because the employee breastfeeds or chooses to express breast milk at work.
- Your employer must allow “reasonable time” (10-30+ minutes per break) and a suitable room for pumping (not a bathroom!) in close proximity to your working area.
- Pumping time does not have to be paid unless your employer provides normally paid break time for other employees.
- You are permitted by law to feed your baby at a child care center during the day, either in a private space designated for nursing OR in the classroom, whichever YOU prefer.
- Your health insurance is required by law to pay for a breast pump.



Your childcare providers should be able to direct you to local resources, but they may not be experts in lactation. Need help or info?

Go to [ZipMilk.org](http://ZipMilk.org) and [BreastfeedingNJ.org](http://BreastfeedingNJ.org).

WIC also provides wholesome food and breastfeeding support from pregnancy until your baby is up to five years old.

# #3: What to expect

Many NJ families successfully breastfeed infants in child care.

## THE PREPARATION

- You will need to prepare your body, your baby and your employer for returning to work. Once you have a new rhythm and routine established, its continuation will run much more smoothly. (See *section #5 for help and tips.*)
- You will need to choose a breastfeeding-friendly child care center. (See *section #6 for help and tips.*)
- You will be responsible for providing feeding containers (properly labeled bottles, cups, etc.) and expressed milk to your child care provider on a regular basis. (You would also have this responsibility if you choose to feed your baby formula.)



## HOW IT ACTUALLY WORKS



- Many parents feed their baby at drop off, pickup, and/or during the day if their schedule permits.
- When you drop off your baby, you will leave enough milk for the day and also have an emergency reserve stored if your baby needs extra.
- You will bring your pump, its equipment and milk storage supplies to and from work or school each day.
- Expect to pump at the times you would normally feed your baby, 2-3+ times per day for 10-30+ minutes each time. As your baby gets older, the time spent pumping per day may go down.
- Many women use their breaks and lunch break to pump. Some women come to work early or stay late to make up the time needed to pump.
- Breastmilk is food, so it is safe to store it in a refrigerator or a cooler with ice packs after you pump it. Label the container with your name and the date. Try to keep the milk in the back of the refrigerator where the temperature is the most consistent and cold.
- Your baby's feeding schedule and your body's pumping needs will adjust over time. The feeding schedule may include more night feeding than before if s/he is craving more closeness with you.

[WATCH VIDEOS](#)

# #4: Make your plan

You prepared for your birth. Prepare for this change too!



**Enroll in a prenatal breastfeeding class while you are pregnant. Your hospital, midwife or doctor's office can direct you to a local class.**



**Discuss your plans to breastfeed with your employer before you go out on maternity leave so you both know what to expect.**



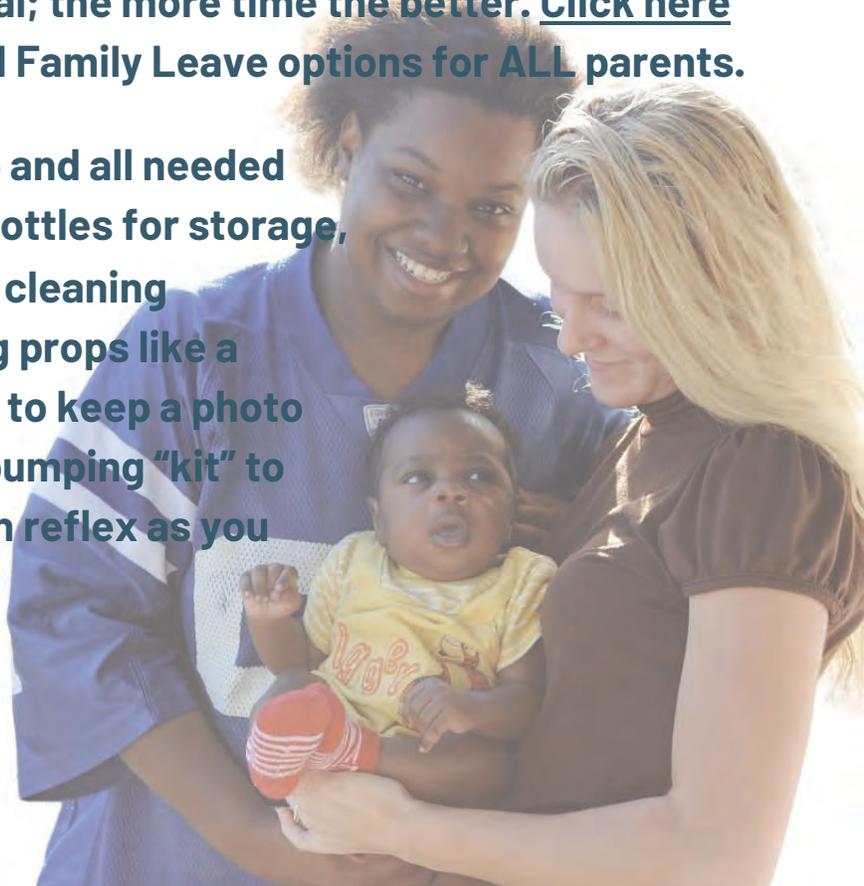
**Do your best to resolve lactation challenges and difficulties before you go back to work. Use [Zipmilk.org](https://www.zipmilk.org) to find support.**



**Return to work at the time that's right for you and your family. 6+ weeks off is optimal; the more time the better. [Click here](#) to learn about NJ Paid Family Leave options for ALL parents.**



**Obtain a breast pump and all needed equipment: bags or bottles for storage, tubes, flanges, pump cleaning supplies and pumping props like a pillow. You may want to keep a photo of your baby in your pumping "kit" to stimulate the letdown reflex as you express milk.**



# #5: Prepare your body & your baby for the change

Start at least 2 weeks before your baby goes to child care.

## YOUR BODY

- Practice pumping and get comfortable with your breast pump. This can take a little time, so start at times your baby is with a caregiver, or when your baby may not have completely emptied both breasts.
- Breasts make an average of 1 ounce of milk per hour. It's normal to get small amounts the first few times you pump.
- When away from your baby, pump as often as your baby would usually nurse (at least every 3-4 hours) to maintain your supply. Always try to empty both breasts entirely at each pumping session.
- Start to build up a supply of milk to give to your child care center. This can be refrigerated or frozen for later use according to [CDC human milk storage guidelines](#).<sup>4</sup>





## PREPARE YOUR BABY

**At least 2 weeks before child care begins, help your baby get used to bottle-feeding.**

- At 4+ weeks of age or more, you can introduce your baby to paced bottle feeding. This method is optimal for breastfed infants. Learn more from a lactation consultant or [KellyMom.org](https://www.kellymom.org).
- Have someone else feed your baby a small amount (1-3 oz) from a bottle when your baby is relaxed - not when s/he is very hungry or upset. This increases the chance of the baby taking it and not wasting unused milk.
- Use slow flow or newborn bottle nipples, and do not force the bottle into your baby's mouth. Tickle your baby's mouth gently with the bottle nipple and let your baby draw the nipple into his or her mouth.
- Your baby may be able to drink from a cup at 3 or 4 months old.
- Notice how many times your baby eats per day. Each baby is different, but 1-6 month-old babies eat an average of 25 ounces of breast milk each day. Estimate how much your baby eats per feeding by dividing 25 by the number of feedings per day. (25 oz/10 feedings = 2.5 oz)

# #6: Choose your child care provider carefully.

How to find a breastfeeding-friendly facility in New Jersey

Receiving high-quality support makes it more likely you'll continue breastfeeding for 6+ months, conferring even more benefit for you and your baby. Unlike many other states, New Jersey families do not have an official way of knowing which child care centers support continued breastfeeding and which do not.

It's important you know what to look for and what questions to ask before you commit to sending your breastfed baby there.

## 1 A breastfeeding-friendly center should provide:

- a clearly-written breastfeeding policy
- a clean, private and comfortable space to express milk
- individualized infant feeding plans
- a tour of proper storage space for milk and bottles
- thorough training for staff in feeding/milk storage and handling
- regular and proactive communication about your child's feeding schedule, needs and changes over time
- learning and play opportunities that normalize breastfeeding among children

*(continued)*



- teachers should be able to discuss the importance of breastfeeding and offer referrals to local breastfeeding resources and professionals.
- teachers should also be offered continued education and training about protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding.

**2** Look for a center that clearly identifies itself as *knowledgable about and in compliance with breastfed infant feeding best practices, including:*

- feeding babies on demand as they observe hunger cues.
- babies should be fed by the same caregiver as often as possible.
- holding babies when feeding and never propping up bottles.
- following approved methods of breast milk feeding, storage and handling. (Have them show you the refrigerator and freezer space available for milk storage.)
- coordinating the last feeding of the day to meet your family's feeding needs (whether to feed or await your arrival).
- the use of paced bottle feeding techniques, which are optimal for breastmilk-fed babies.
- not feeding your baby formula or solid foods without first checking with you.

**3** You must be permitted to express milk in private or feed your child in their classroom, nursery or care area. You are permitted to breastfeed "*anywhere you are otherwise permitted to be*" according to New Jersey law.



## Maintain clear and proactive communication with teachers and staff at your child care center.

The more you help caregivers get to know your baby and stay in regular communication, the smoother continued breastfeeding will go.



Prepare notes ahead of time about your baby's feeding signals, schedules and preferences. These will be incorporated into your infant feeding plan, which should be revised at least monthly as your baby grows.

*This plan can also include:*

- what to give your baby if there isn't enough expressed milk to meet hunger or fluid milk needs (which vary by age)
- what the provider should do if the baby shows hunger cues within an hour of your pick-up time.

Your caregiver should update you on the quantity of milk remaining to avoid waste and ensure an adequate supply for your child.

Your caregiver should inform you about the center's written procedures and the proper way to label your breast milk.



# IN NEW JERSEY BREASTFEEDING WORKS!

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## REFERENCES + RESOURCES

Images provided by the U.S. Breastfeeding Coalition's  
["Landscape of Breastfeeding Support" Image Gallery](#)

1: American Academy of Pediatrics. <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/breastfeeding-guidance-post-hospital-discharge/>

2: NJ Women Infants & Children (WIC)

<https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/wic/breastfeedingbenefits.shtml>

3: Breastfeeding as a Protected Class: NJ Law Against Discrimination (N.J.S.A. 10:5-12)

4: US Centers for Disease Control.

[https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling\\_breastmilk.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm)

- ZipMilk.org - Do you need help breastfeeding? Enter your zip code to find expert support near you.
- Perinatal Health Equity Foundation- Dedicated to changing the narrative on black infant and maternal health. <https://www.perinatalequity.org>
- New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition - Dedicated to promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding by working collaboratively. [breastfeedingnj.org](http://breastfeedingnj.org)
- New Jersey Department of Labor - Paid Family Leave options. <https://www.myleavebenefits.nj.gov/labor/myleavebenefits/worker/maternity/>
- KellyMom.org - evidence-based information on paced bottle feeding and other lactation topics. <https://kellymom.com/bf/pumpingmoms/feeding-tools/bottle-feeding/>
- Office on Women's Health - Breastfeeding & Going Back to Work. <https://www.womenshealth.gov/breastfeeding/breastfeeding-home-work-and-public/breastfeeding-and-going-back-work>
- State of New Jersey Parent Link - <https://www.nj.gov/njparentlink/>
- State of New Jersey Department of Human Services, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies - <https://www.childcarenj.gov/Parents/Child-Care-Resource-and-Referral-Agencies.aspx>