



MISSISSIPPI WINS

Workplaces Improving
Nursing Support

LACTATION ACCOMMODATION SOLUTIONS: EDUCATION

Educational settings can accommodate lactating parents with a variety of creative solutions. Support need not be expensive or time-consuming. Best of all, supporting both staff and teachers can make it easier to recruit and retain quality employees. It is a valuable addition to your employee benefits package and worksite wellness program. Breastfeeding employees and students who are supported at work are healthier, more productive, and loyal.

It Works for Business

Providing lactation accommodations in the education sector can bring about a **3 to 1 Return on Investment**¹ due to:

- ▶ **Lower absenteeism rates** from unplanned sick days since breastfed babies are healthier.²
- ▶ **Higher retention rates** after staff leave to give birth. A 9-company study found that the return to work rate among employers who provide lactation support is 94% compared to the national average of 59%.³
- ▶ **Lower healthcare costs** and insurance claims when infants are breastfed.⁴
- ▶ **Higher productivity** and loyalty among workers.⁵

It's Required by Law

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)⁶ requires employers to provide lactating employees with:

- ▶ "Reasonable break time" to express milk as often as the employee has need.
- ▶ Private space that is **not a bathroom** that is "shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public" that employees can use to express milk.

The FLSA provisions cover both exempt and nonexempt workers in most industries, including schools. Schools receiving Title IX funding must provide equal access for pregnant and new parenting students. Schools and universities have found that providing basic support is not difficult or expensive, and simple, doable solutions abound.



Space Solutions

Educational institutions use varied solutions to create lactation stations for staff and students. The facility manager is an ideal partner in this effort.

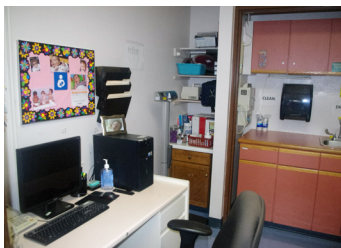
K-12 School Settings

- Nurse's offices or clinics within the school (if they can be disinfected prior to use)
- Personal office space
- Conference room
- Office of other staff (e.g., principal, guidance counselor, librarian, or school official)



College Campus Setting

- Ideally, provide space in all campus buildings to limit walk time and optimize use. At a minimum, select locations in key buildings (e.g., student union, administrative building).
- Indicate lactation facilities on campus map and on website.
- Convert storage areas, well-ventilated closets, and small office space.
- Provide space in campus childcare center.



Amenities

The U.S. Department of Labor states that lactation areas must be functional for milk expression⁷ and include, at a minimum, a chair, a flat surface (other than the floor) on which to place the breast pump, and access to electricity.⁸ Identify locations near a source of running water with the ability to be locked. Include anti-microbial wipes to wipe down surfaces between users. Some schools include a white noise machine to minimize hallway traffic noise.



Time and Coverage

The FLSA requires employers to provide reasonable time for lactating employees to express milk when the need arises. Employees typically need to express milk every two to three hours. It typically takes around 15-20 minutes to express milk depending on the person and the age of the baby. This does not include travel and clean-up time. Each employee is different and no set amount of time will fit everyone's needs. Most employees use existing breaks and meal periods to express milk. Many find that creative scheduling in advance can help them meet their needs and the needs of the school. In some schools, employees make up any extra time needed by coming to work earlier, staying a little later, or taking a shorter meal period. If coverage is needed, other staff, Title IX staff or floaters, or managers can assist. In some settings, milk expression breaks might need to be scheduled.



Other Support

An onsite health clinic and health staff can provide additional breastfeeding support. Some school clinics include milk expression space. The campus grant funding office may be able to secure special funding to allow for any necessary renovations. The school nurse can often provide lactation support for employees.



Consider...

- ▶ Collaborate with other departments (e.g., work life, women's studies, HR, public health).
- ▶ Open lactation spaces to staff, faculty, students, and guests visiting the campus.
- ▶ In larger physical campuses, seek to provide spaces within a 5-minute walk.
- ▶ Partner with the local hospital, WIC agency, lactation consultant, La Leche League, or breastfeeding coalition to offer breastfeeding classes for students, staff, and faculty.
- ▶ HR or work life can include lactation support laws and support services as part of training for department managers and supervisors.
- ▶ Policy can require lactation space in development of new or renovated campus buildings.
- ▶ Policies and practices that account for the needs of pregnant and breastfeeding students.

For more information, contact the Center for Health Equity, Education, and Research (CHEER) at their Mississippi WINS resource site, www.cheerequity.org/resources/breastfeeding-baby-friendly-resources/workplace-resources. Or, visit the "Employer Solutions" website at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office on Women's Health at www.womenshealth.gov/supporting-nursing-moms-work. A breastfeeding toolkit is also available specifically for the education sector at [www.kansasbusinesscase.com/sites/default/files/Breastfeeding Support on College Campuses Toolkit.pdf](http://www.kansasbusinesscase.com/sites/default/files/Breastfeeding%20Support%20on%20College%20Campuses%20Toolkit.pdf).

The State of Mississippi is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of ADA Services

1 Washington Business Group on Health. Breastfeeding Support at the Workplace. Washington, D.C.; 2000. Issue No. 2.

2 Cohen R, Mrtek MB, Mrtek RG. Comparison of maternal absenteeism and infant illness rates among breastfeeding and formula-feeding women in two corporations. Am J Health Prom. 1995;19(2):148-153.

3 Ortiz J, et al. Duration of breast milk expression among working mothers enrolled in an employer-sponsored lactation program. Ped Nursing. 2004;30(2):111-119.

4 Mutual of Omaha. Prenatal and lactation education reduces newborn health care costs. Omaha, NE: Mutual of Omaha, 2001.

5 Galtry J. Lactation and the labor market: breastfeeding labor market changes and public policy in the United States. Health Care Women Int. 1997;18:467-480.

6 U.S. Department of Labor. Break Time for Nursing Mothers. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pump-at-work>

7 U.S. Department of Labor. Fact Sheet #73: Break Time for Nursing Mothers Under the FLSA. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/73-flsa-break-time-nursing-mothers>

8 U.S. Department of Labor. Request for Information on Break Time for Nursing Mothers. Federal Register 75:80073-80079, Dec. 21, 2010. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2010-12-21/pdf/2010-31959.pdf>