

# Breastfeeding Welcome Here

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[breastfeedingrocks.com](http://breastfeedingrocks.com)

Businesses and organizations can help build a healthier community while encouraging a stronger economy by being supportive and welcoming to breastfeeding families.

Breastfeeding Welcome Here is a program for businesses and organizations to welcome breastfeeding and to support women and the families' decision to breastfeed their babies. There is no cost to pledge your participation.

Displaying the Breastfeeding Welcome Here decal makes it easy for families to immediately recognize breastfeeding-friendly places. When they are out and about in public areas, the decal lets them know where they can breastfeed comfortably. Moreover, the Breastfeeding Welcome Here sign helps strengthen public awareness that breastfeeding is normal and essential.

Similar Breastfeeding Welcome Here programs have been implemented across the United States as well as in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and the Philippines.

The Breastfeeding Welcome Here sign utilizes two important symbols. First is the International Breastfeeding Symbol showing a mother breastfeeding a baby. The Breastfeeding Symbol was designed by Matt Daigle and it is now used globally to let people know where breastfeeding is welcome; it is also used in various materials to support, promote, and protect breastfeeding. The second image is breastfeedingrocks.com logo that directs people where to go for more information about the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program in our area.

## Why is breastfeeding good for business?

Savvy establishments recognize that families will patronize businesses that are welcoming to babies and young children. Your customers will see your business is interested in the health and welfare of the community.

Moreover, members of the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program receive recognition through promotion and publicity. Your business will also be listed in a directory of breastfeeding-friendly places, enabling families to easily find a location to breastfeed while out.

Beyond improving customer service, the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program increases public acceptance for breastfeeding, and encourages more families to breastfeed exclusively for six months – and even extend breastfeeding to the recommended two years and beyond.



# Breastfeeding is good for babies, mothers, and business!

Families are valuable customers for every business. Women make the decisions for 85% of all consumer purchases. By providing a positive environment where mothers can comfortably nurse while shopping, eating, enjoying a cup of coffee, or worshipping in their chosen church, families return the favor by spending more, visiting repeatedly, and leaving positive reviews.

## So what's the big deal?

The majority mothers in the United States initiate breastfeeding so we know these mothers have chosen to breastfeed. When new mothers and babies are out of the house, they are more likely to patronize businesses and visit locations that welcome breastfeeding.

Many mothers are afraid to breastfeed in public. The problem is big enough that it keeps mothers from breastfeeding at all or causes them to end their breastfeeding relationship before meeting their breastfeeding goals.

Additionally, this is a big deal because Alabama's law that supports breastfeeding in public states

*"A mother may breastfeed her child in any location, public or private, where the mother is otherwise authorized to be present." (Ala. Code § 22-1-13)*

All businesses and public places, by law, must be breastfeeding friendly.

## Why is breastfeeding so great?

Scientific research and studies affirm that breastfeeding is truly optimal for babies' nutrition, development, and well-being, even in developed countries such as the United States. The United States would save \$2.2 billion per year if 90% of families breastfed exclusively for 6 months because medical care costs are lower for fully breastfed infants than never-breastfed infants.

Breast milk provides all of the nutrients, vitamins and minerals an infant needs for growth for the first six months, and no other liquids or food are needed. Breast milk is a complex living nutritional fluid containing anti-bodies, enzymes, long chain fatty acids, and hormones.

Breastfed babies are shown to form healthy attachments with their mothers and are less likely to be victims of maternal abuse or neglect. Breastfeeding mothers experience a strong sense of connection with their babies. Mothering through breastfeeding is vital for the wellbeing of the youth of tomorrow.

Breastfed babies are less likely to have allergies or develop childhood sickness like asthma, ear infections, type 2 diabetes, leukemia, lower respiratory infections, and necrotizing enterocolitis. Breastfed babies also have lower risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Breastfeeding mothers experience reduced risks of breast, ovarian, and endometrial cancers as well as reduced risk of type 2 diabetes. The longer mothers breastfeed, the more they reap the health benefits of breastfeeding. Mothers need the support and encouragement of people around them to sustain breastfeeding.

Breastfeeding helps make a more productive workforce. Mothers who breastfeed miss less work to care for sick infants than mothers who feed their infants formula. Employer medical costs are also lower for breastfeeding families.

## Who can join the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program?

All businesses that are open to the general public including coffee shops, restaurants, retail stores, supermarkets, spas and salons are encouraged to participate. Additionally, everyone benefits when healthcare providers, hospitals, government offices, and community organizations participate.

## What does the Breastfeeding Welcome Here Business Pledge include?

In order to join, businesses must fulfil the following membership criteria:

- a.) All Breastfeeding Welcome Here participants will provide a welcoming and friendly environment from staff and management while breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is acceptable in all areas of the business premises that are open to the general public. A mother who is breastfeeding in an area of business premises open to the general public will not be approached due to breastfeeding and will not be requested to move to another area, stop breastfeeding, or cover up.
- b.) All staff and management will be aware that the business is a member of the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program.
- c.) Staff members are trained on how to handle complaints about breastfeeding. Staff and concerned customers will be informed that breastfeeding in public is protected by law and that this business welcomes breastfeeding patrons.
- d.) The Breastfeeding Welcome Here decal and certificate will be displayed publicly on premises.

## How does my business participate in Breastfeeding Welcome Here?

1. To participate, complete the “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” Business Pledge form on [breastfeedingrocks.com](http://breastfeedingrocks.com). There is no cost to you.
2. The Breastfeeding Welcome Here coordinator will issue and mail a “Breastfeeding Welcome Here” window decal for you to display on entrance door or window and the certificate for display within business premises.
3. Inform all current and future staff members regarding participation in the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program and educate staff how to provide a supportive attitude to breastfeeding families.
4. Email three to five photos of your business displaying the Breastfeeding Welcome Here decal and certificate for social media recognition. Photos of business staff and even breastfeeding families in the premises (with their permission) are appreciated.

## What does Breastfeeding Rocks offer in return for your pledge?

1. Name of business and location will be added to list on [breastfeedingrocks.com](http://breastfeedingrocks.com) of places participating in the program.
2. All businesses who have taken the pledge will receive recognition through [breastfeedingrocks.com](http://breastfeedingrocks.com) promotion and awareness actions by collaborative breastfeeding support organizations. Photos of your business displaying the Breastfeeding Welcome Here decal will be posted on our social media and website ([breastfeedingrocks.com](http://breastfeedingrocks.com)).

# Breastfeeding Welcome Here

## Staff Education

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A well informed staff is critical to the support of breastfeeding patrons within an establishment. Clear guidelines minimize confusion or misinterpretation of expectations.

Staff need to know why welcoming breastfeeding in public is important, and what is expected of them.

1. Staff are expected to welcome mothers to breastfeed anywhere customers are allowed. Welcoming can simply mean allowing the mother to breastfeed undisturbed. Welcoming can also mean accommodating a mother's needs. For example, if a mother requests a place to sit, staff may direct her to the nearest chair. Each mother decides how much she will or will not cover up based on her personal comfort level and the needs of her baby.
2. If a mother requests privacy, staff are expected to direct her to a designated private location. Staff are expected to respect the law. Alabama law does not require that a mother go to a private location or bathroom to breastfeed her child. Staff should be prepared to advise mothers about a nearby non-bathroom private location if she requests privacy.
3. If another customer complains to staff in regards to the breastfeeding mother, inform the customer that the law supports breastfeeding in public. Offer to make other accommodations to help the customer be more comfortable while maintaining the mother's right to breastfeed without relocating or being asked to cover. Suggested response: "I hear and understand that you are uncomfortable. However, Alabama law protects breastfeeding in public, and our policy is to welcome breastfeeding within our establishment. Is there something that I can do to help you feel more comfortable?"

### Sample Policy

Breastfeeding support policies provide a clear message to business employees and patrons about the organization's position on breastfeeding.

A sample policy might state:

*[Business Name] provides a welcoming environment to breastfeeding mothers. Mothers are permitted to breastfeed in any location patrons are normally welcomed within [Business Name]. Personnel provide a welcoming environment, and, to the fullest extent possible, encourage support from other customers.*

For a breastfeeding support policy pertaining to breastfeeding employees, please see this sample provided by the Kansas Business Case for Breastfeeding. ([http://kansasbusinesscase.com/for\\_employers/nursing\\_policy\\_example](http://kansasbusinesscase.com/for_employers/nursing_policy_example))

**Open your doors to breastfeeding families  
& welcome breastfeeding today!**

# FAQ

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## What is the public breastfeeding law in Alabama?

Ala. Code § 22-1-13.

“A mother may breastfeed her child in any location, public or private, where the mother is otherwise authorized to be present. “

The National Conference of State Legislature website lists breastfeeding laws by state. (<http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/breastfeeding-state-laws.aspx>)

## How should you respond if other patrons complain?

One option might be, “I hear you and understand that you’re uncomfortable. However, Alabama law protects breastfeeding in public, and our policy is to welcome breastfeeding within our establishment. Is there something that I can do to help you feel more comfortable?”

## What is wrong with asking a mom to move to the restroom or cover up?

It implies that a mother and baby are engaging in a shameful or distasteful act when she is simply feeding her child. A restroom is not a hygienic location to feed a baby. For many infants, a cover disrupts the breastfeeding process.

## Why can’t the mother just bring a bottle or nurse before she leaves home?

Breastfeeding is a complex biological relationship. Pumping and bottle feeding is labor-intensive and many women aren’t able to express their milk using a pump. Babies often eat on an irregular schedule and it’s important to feed babies when hungry.

## What about the right of others to not see someone breastfeed in public?

If breastfeeding offends someone, they may ignore it, turn away, ask to be seated in another location or leave. A nursing mother and baby are not responsible for another person’s comfort level.

## Are there really that many mothers breastfeeding in public?

Yes, mothers and babies are sometimes so skilled at breastfeeding that people in the same space may not even realize breastfeeding is occurring.

## How long should a mother breastfeed?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that breastfeeding continue for at least 12 months, and thereafter for as long as mother and baby desire. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends continued breastfeeding up to 2 years of age or beyond. With continued breastfeeding of up to two years and beyond, children meet normal biological standards.

## How is the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program funded?

Breastfeeding Rocks offers breastfeeding advocacy apparel. A portion of the sales from Breastfeeding Rocks advocacy apparel will be used to fund the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program in our area.

## Breastfeeding Welcome Here Project Contacts



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