

# Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery

Developing Public Acceptability and Promotion of Breastfeeding in the Early Years



Acknowledgement: with thanks to NHS GG&C

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## Contact

For more information on breastfeeding contact the national breastfeeding helpline number:

**0844 20 909 20**

or website:

[www.feelgoodfactor.co.uk](http://www.feelgoodfactor.co.uk)

## **Becoming a Breastfeeding friendly Nursery**

### **Introduction: A New Approach**

It is known that breastfeeding can have enormous benefit to the health of both the mother and the child. However as well as "knowing the benefits", supportive environments are needed to enable and support breastfeeding. Breastfeeding rates in West Lothian remain amongst the lowest in Scotland, but as part of an overall strategy Nurseries can help to change this.

In Scotland there has been a long tradition of formula feeding and bottle-feeding is viewed as the cultural norm. Alongside this are the negative ways in which breastfeeding is often portrayed in the media. Against this background, it is important to create an environment which promotes positive images of breastfeeding and which starts to address some of the cultural attitudes which impact negatively on breastfeeding.

West Lothian CHCP based on the key principles of the Scottish Governments Maternal & Infant Nutrition Framework has developed an Infant Feeding Strategy that has, as a key principle, the promotion of social and attitude change so that breastfeeding becomes accepted as the normal feeding choice. A Key objective is to develop the public acceptability and promotion of breastfeeding. Working within educational settings is fundamental to achieving this.

The Breastfeeding (Scotland) Act 2005 has now been introduced. This Act makes it an offence to prevent or stop a child who is permitted to be in a public place or licensed premises from being fed milk in that place or on those premises.

Towards National, Regional and Local Strategies for Breastfeeding suggests that schools and education authorities can provide accurate and impartial information and support by:

- Providing infant feeding education in schools
- Using positive and culturally appropriate images of breastfeeding
- Avoiding materials which promote artificial feeding
- Increasing parents' access to impartial information

Breastfeeding is crucial to the overall strategy of improving Scotland's long term health and can contribute to the Curriculum for Excellence, health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes. Examples of where breastfeeding can be supported through Curriculum for Excellence are:

- **HWB 0-15a**  
"I am developing my understanding of the human body and can use this knowledge to maintain and improve my wellbeing and health".
- **HWB 0-47b**  
"I am aware of my growing body and I am learning the correct names for its different parts and how they work".
- **HWB 0-48a**  
"I am learning what I can do to look after my body and who can help me".
- **HWB 0-50a**  
"I am learning about where living things come from and about how they grow, develop and are nurtured".
- **HWB 0-51a**  
"I am able to show an awareness of the tasks required to look after a baby".
- **HWB 1-32a**  
"I am beginning to understand that nutritional needs change at different stages of life, for example the role of breastfeeding in infant nutrition".

## **Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery Aims and Objectives**

### **Aim:**

To contribute to social and cultural change by promoting an environment where breastfeeding is seen as the normal way to feed infants and young children.

### **Objectives:**

- To provide appropriate education and training for staff to enable them to promote, protect and support breastfeeding
- To support informed choice in relation to infant feeding
- To increase awareness of sources of support and information for breastfeeding families.
- To use resources which reflect breastfeeding as the cultural norm
- To provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families and to encourage breastfeeding in the public areas of the establishment
- To support breastfeeding staff/users
- To contribute to the promotion of social and attitude change in relation to breastfeeding
- To develop public acceptability and the promotion of breastfeeding
- To enable Early Years establishments to meet criteria for the Breastfeeding Welcome Award

## **Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery**

### **Introduction: A New Approach** continued

Nurseries have a strong health focus and close relationships with the parents and carers of young children. They are therefore an ideal setting to develop an environment where breastfeeding is acknowledged as the culturally normal way to feed an infant and where breastfeeding is promoted, supported and protected.

Children should be aware of breastfeeding as a natural choice and the Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery programme seeks to create that type of environment. In areas where breastfeeding rates remain extremely low this is an important step in tackling the common belief that formula feeding is the usual way to feed babies and small children.

Including breastfeeding as part of the curriculum will undoubtedly raise its profile for the duration of the programme however it will not provide an ongoing method of addressing the deeply entrenched view of formula feeding as a cultural norm.

This approach relies upon and builds on the partnership working skills that health visitors/public health nurses and Early Years workers already have. Increasingly, government policy supports this type of joint working to improve health.

This model is also an ideal way of linking health visitors with Early Years establishments as suggested in Health for All Children, Scottish Consultation.

In addition, this approach can be used to help support the implementation of strategic guidelines and key policy documents such as National Care Standards, A Curriculum for Excellence, Nutritional guidance for Early Years, The Early Years Framework, Birth to Three, Child at the Centre, getting it Right for Every Child and the Maternal and Infant Nutrition Framework.

The Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery approach outlines 6 key objectives for development and provides a structured programme to demonstrate how each of these might be progressed in an Early Years establishment. The programme is suitable for use within an extended day nursery, nursery school or class, crèche, playgroup or any other type of education and childcare facility. In addition, the ethos and principles could well be applied to other areas such as primary and secondary schools, libraries, leisure centres and so on.

### **Children as Individuals**

#### **Fostering equal opportunities**

- Girls and boys should be given opportunities to participate equally in the full range of learning experiences, playing with a variety of tools and equipment. Care should be taken that particular activities do not become associated with boys or girls. All children should be encouraged, for example to play in the house
- Books pictures, jigsaws, stories, rhymes and puzzles should be selected to show positive images of people of different races and cultures, and show girls, boys, men and women in a range of roles

#### **Collaborating with other agencies**

- In working with other professionals on ethos of mutual trust and openness is essential, as is respect for the range of skills and expertise that each contributes to a co-ordinated service for children and their families

## **Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery**

### **Stage 1: Staff Training**

#### **Aim:**

To provide education and training for all staff to enable them to promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

#### **Objectives:**

- To raise awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding to the baby, mother and society
- To raise awareness of how attitudes are formed and acknowledge the barriers to breastfeeding that exists in society
- To raise awareness of how attitudes are formed and acknowledge the barriers to breastfeeding that exist in society
- To use resources which reflect breastfeeding as the cultural norm
- To provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families
- To ensure staff are aware of resources available

The staff education programme can be completed over a 2 hour training session. It is recommended that the session should be provided as part of the in-service programme. Using protected time in this way ensures that the maximum number of staff can access the education programme, giving them the skills and knowledge to fully implement the Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery programme.

It is also useful if the session is not restricted to workers who are directly involved in the care and education of the children within the centre but that all staff including clerical, domestic and janitorial staff are included. Ensuring that a wide range of staff participate will increase the likelihood of affecting the culture within the entire establishment.

The education session is designed to be participative and includes input on why breastfeeding is important and explore social and cultural issues in relation to infant feeding. It looks at resources which may be used in Early Years establishment and how they depict infant feeding and ways in which establishments can provide a welcoming atmosphere for breastfeeding families. The session also looks at what resources are available to support nurseries undertaking the Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery programme and how to proceed to accreditation.



I've never had any problems breastfeeding anywhere. Once an elderly lady came up to me and said how wonderful it was that I was doing the best thing for my child

## **Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery**

### **Stage 2: Review of Resources**

#### **Aim:**

To review all resources used within the establishment and to ensure that breastfeeding is promoted as the cultural norm.

#### **Objectives:**

- To review all resources in line with suggested guidelines
- To remove items that depict formula feeding as the cultural norm
- To replace these with resources which depict breastfeeding as the cultural norm
- To provide accurate information leaflets that are free from advertising
- To develop systems to ensure this process is ongoing

#### **A. Resource review**

It is important to undertake a systematic review of all resources, books, posters and toys to determine what kind of message they are giving about infant feeding.

When reviewing resources the following questions should be asked.

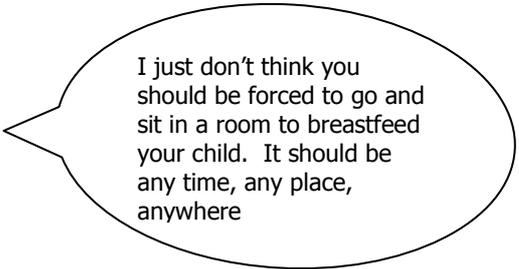
1. Do children's books or textbooks show bottles being used to feed babies, dolls or animals
2. Do resources contain pictures of infant feeding bottles?
3. Are bottles, teats or dummies used as a symbol for babies?
4. Do toys promote bottle-feeding as the cultural norm? e.g. do dolls come with bottles
5. Does the resource depict breastfeeding?

Resources that reinforce formula feeding should be replaced or adapted. For example, a book that depicts formula feeding should be replaced with one that shows breastfeeding or a doll's feeding bottle replaced with a cup. Any images of infants being fed should show breastfeeding only or appropriate use of a cup.

A list of books that depict breastfeeding is provided.

It is important to remember to appraise all resources such as teaching materials, puzzles, dolls, houses, posters and imaginative play toys. Items that promote formula feeding are often found in unexpected places such as the wallpaper in a doll's house that had feeding bottles and dummies as a pattern.

Care should be taken to ensure that all new or borrowed resources coming into the establishment are similarly appraised and that new staff are aware of the need to continually monitor this aspect



I just don't think you should be forced to go and sit in a room to breastfeed your child. It should be any time, any place, anywhere

## Review of Resources

### Formula Milk Manufacturer's Materials and Information

Formula milk manufacturers provide a wide range of health information, infant feeding leaflets, samples and other promotional materials such as calendars, pens and mugs. Attempts may be made by representatives of the companies to distribute them through nurseries. If an establishment is approached in such a way they should decline information, samples, promotional materials and/or gifts and contact a member of the local health visiting team.

For health professionals there is very clear guidance as the NHS Lothian Feeding Policies and Guidelines prohibit direct contact between formula companies and health professionals. Within NHS Lothian Infant Feeding Advisors host a Formula Forum 6 monthly with formula milk representatives to ensure that only factual, scientific information is received by health professionals.

It is often argued that there is a lack of information for formula feeding mothers and therefore manufacturer's leaflets are used. However, factual up to date information on how to prepare feeds and sterilise equipment, which is free of advertising, can be found following the link:

[www.babyfriendly.org.uk](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk)



## **Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery Stage 3: The Nursery Environment**

### **Aims:**

To provide an atmosphere where breastfeeding is encouraged, supported and protected.

### **Objectives:**

- To display posters which show the aim and objectives of the Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery
- To display posters that promote breastfeeding and the Breastfeeding Welcome Award sticker
- To incorporate aim, objectives and other appropriate information into the nursery handbook for parents
- To ensure that physical environment of the establishment supports breastfeeding

The nursery environment is not just about what is on display in the building. It encompasses the whole ethos of the establishment from what is displayed to staff attitudes and how well the physical environment supports breastfeeding.

### **A. Display materials**

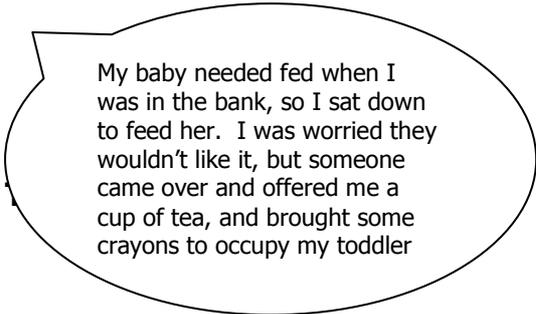
Posters such as UNICEF'S 'World of Breastfeeding Benefits' is available from UNICEF UK Baby Friendly in the Community, as well as those available from the health promotion department catalogue can be displayed in the centre.

### **B. Handbook for Parents**

If there is a handbook produced for parents then the following information should be included:

- Aim and objectives of the 'Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery'.
- Benefits of breastfeeding
- How the Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery is incorporated with Health Promoting schools.

The aim and objectives of the 'Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery' should also be included in the establishment's policy document.



My baby needed fed when I was in the bank, so I sat down to feed her. I was worried they wouldn't like it, but someone came over and offered me a cup of tea, and brought some crayons to occupy my toddler

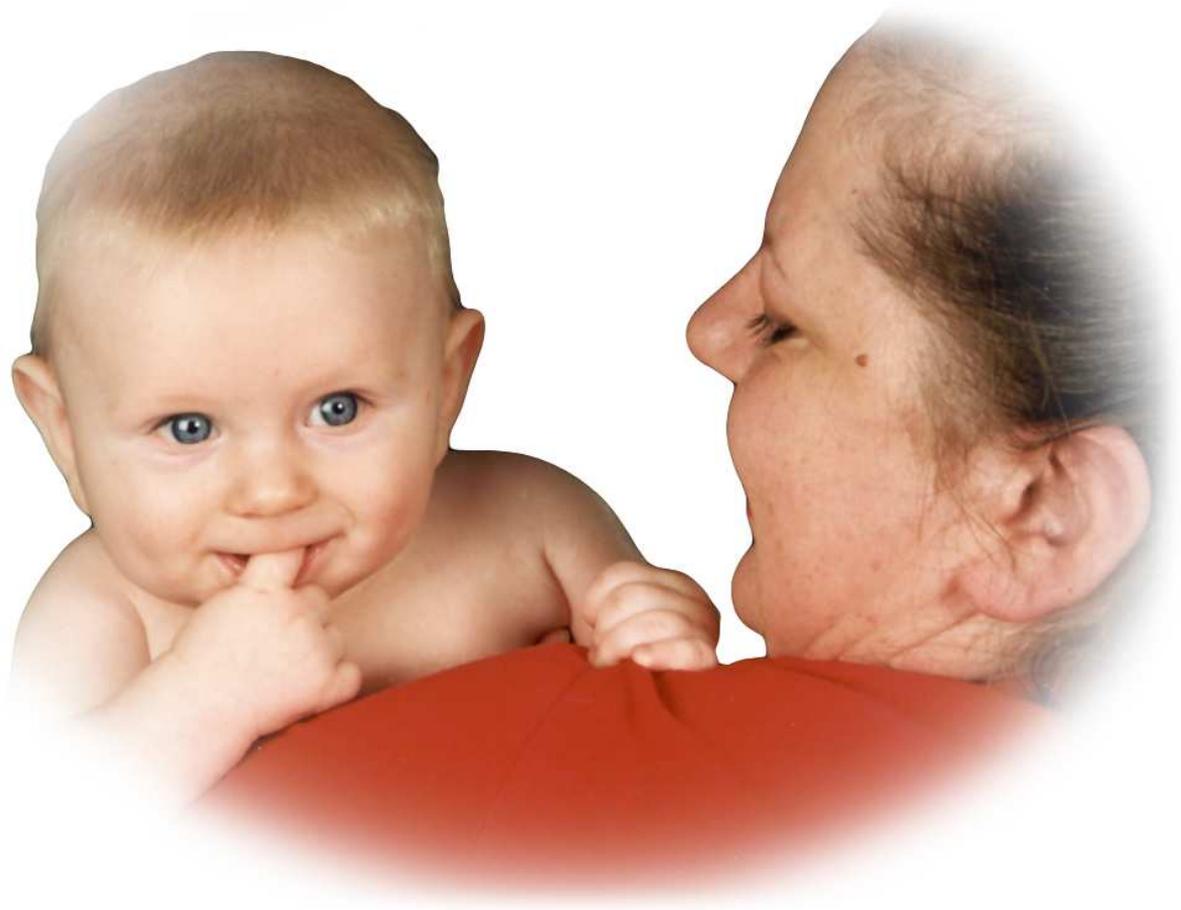
### **C. Breastfeeding in Public Areas**

In compliance with the Breastfeeding Scotland Act 2005 it is against the law to prevent a mother from breastfeeding her baby.

In terms of physical environment, it is not necessary, or desirable to have a special area for breastfeeding. Mothers who are happy to do so should be encouraged to feed their babies in the public areas of the centre. Consideration needs to be given however to the feelings and opinions of other users and thought should be given to how such issues can be dealt with sensitively. There will be an opportunity to discuss how the establishment will deal with some scenarios during the training session. In addition, some mothers will wish privacy for feeding and ways to accommodate this must also be thought out. Whatever area is used to provide privacy, staff should bear in mind security, confidentiality and data protection issues.

### **D. Breastfeeding and Returning to Work**

The ethos behind the 'Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery' extends to supporting not only users of the establishment but also to staff returning to work who may still be breastfeeding. An exemplar policy developed by the Scottish Government is available from [www.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.scotland.gov.uk) .

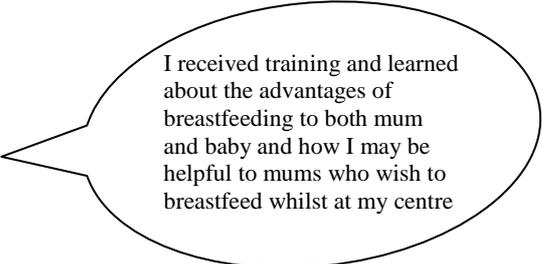


## **Becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery**

### **Stage 4: Ongoing support and development**

The Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery is not something that should be seen as a one off training event but rather as a whole ethos to be adopted within the nursery. For this reason it is important that procedures are put in place

1. Ensure that the profile of breastfeeding and the ethos of the Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery are kept high within the establishment. As suggested in the action plan, appointing someone to take responsibility for this and ensuring that it is part of nursery planning as well as discussion at staff meetings should help to ensure that breastfeeding remains topical
2. there should be a mechanism for making sure that staff new to the establishment are aware that the nursery is breastfeeding friendly and that they understand what that means in terms of their own role. New staff should be able to access appropriate training. The training could be done by member of staff responsible for breastfeeding, supported by the health professional aligned to the nursery
3. Procedures need to be in place to ensure that temporary staff are aware of their responsibilities under the scheme. If temporary staff are to remain in a centre for any length of time it would be useful to provide them with appropriate training
4. Parents should be made aware that the establishment is a breastfeeding friendly nursery. This could be done by displaying posters, by including a section about the programme in the parents' handbook and by discussing it at parents' evening
5. Resources should be continually reviewed. Resources come from a variety of sources, some are purchased, some are given and other are borrowed. There should be a robust system to ensure that anything coming into the nursery is appraised according to the questions on page 8 of this handbook
6. To ensure 'Breastfeeding Friendly Nursery' status is achieved and recognised commitment will be required by all staff, not just from Heads of Early Years establishments or Managers. It is key that it becomes integrated into normal nursery routine rather than perceived as extra pieces of work
7. Accreditation will be awarded when the objectives have been implemented and a Breastfeeding Friendly policy has been adopted. Support and advice for Self Evaluation will be available from CHCP staff



I received training and learned about the advantages of breastfeeding to both mum and baby and how I may be helpful to mums who wish to breastfeed whilst at my centre