

Your Breastfed Infant in the Child Care Setting

By planning ahead you can choose a care provider who will meet your needs.

Returning to work and continuing to breastfeed can provide a closeness and bond with your child while you are at work. Your baby will benefit if he or she can build a close relationship with the people in his or her life.

Allow plenty of time to interview potential providers. Consider starting the process while you are pregnant or as soon as you know you will be returning to work. You may have family members or friends who can help with child care, or you may choose a commercial child care center, home day care, sharing child care with a friend or a combination of these. Remember, many in home providers and day care centers have waiting lists.

Allow at least two weeks to prepare for the time when you will be away from your baby. Express your breastmilk at least once a day and save it for your child care provider to give to your baby.

Consider the following when choosing a child care provider

- Knowledgeable about breastfeeding or willing to learn.

- Licensed to provide infant and child care.

- Provides a safe and clean place for your baby.

- The maximum ratio of infants to staff is four to one.

- The infant room has a rocking chair, cribs or other appropriate infant equipment and supplies.

- Encourages your visits to the child care location to breastfeed and play with your baby. Has an area where you are comfortable breastfeeding.

- Has a trained staff who have experience with infant care and who are nurturing and attentive to children and their care.

- Shares your belief that you can continue to breastfeed after you return to work.

- Is a short distance from work if you are able to leave work to nurse your baby.

- Has a refrigerator and a freezer for properly storing breastmilk and warm water for warming or defrosting breastmilk. *Note: Licensed child care providers have stricter guidelines for breastmilk storage than what is advised for storing breastmilk in your own home.*





Practice child care visit(s)

Practice visits are a way of transitioning your baby. The visits help your baby become used to the child care provider. It allows you time to coordinate your efforts in getting yourself and the baby ready in a way similar to the one you will be using when you return to work. The practice visits could be once a week for four weeks, or for one feeding per day a week before you return to work. Keep track of your baby's normal feeding times and write them down for your child care provider.

You must be able to completely trust your care provider. If you feel uncomfortable about leaving your baby with the person you've selected, drop in unannounced

several times. If you sense anything wrong at any time, take your baby and leave and never go back. This applies to friends and relatives.

Make it clear that you do not want your child care provider to feed your child right before you pick him or her up or before you arrive home as this is a good time to nurse your baby and it will help you keep a good milk supply.

Other comforts

When your baby is away from you, it may be helpful to provide comforts to help him or her feel secure. If your baby has a comfort object such as a stuffed animal or a special blanket, make sure it remains with him while he is away from you.

Other things that may help provide comfort include a:

- Cloth or piece of clothing with your scent—babies have a good sense of smell.
- Tape recording of your voice singing lullabies or reading.
- Windup musical toy or mobile.

Let the child care provider know how you hold your baby during feedings. This may help the baby relax.

Additional information

Growth spurts occur with breastfed babies just as they do with formula fed babies, usually at six weeks, three months and six months. You, the breastfeeding mother, will notice the growth spurts more readily because they directly impact your schedule. During a growth spurt, your baby may be fussy and want to nurse longer or more frequently. This is normal. Increase the length of the feedings and try to nurse more often, if possible. Fussiness associated with growth spurts usually last two to four days. The end result is your milk supply increases to meet your baby's additional needs.

Nursing Strikes

This occurs when a baby suddenly refuses the breast. Sometimes a mother will think that her baby wants to wean, when in fact, the baby is becoming interested in her surroundings. This often happens around eight or nine months of age. Nursing strikes may have several causes, all of which can be handled

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with patience and understanding of your baby's needs. Some causes may be:

- Teething or gum soreness.
- Over stimulation from sights or sounds.
- Your baby is testing control of his environment.
- Flavor differences of breastmilk due to changes in the mother's diet.
- Reaction to a change in routine.
- Normal developmental stage of being distracted and interested in other things.

Leaking

Use direct pressure over the nipple if you are unable to pump. Crossing your arms over your chest is a discreet way to do this. Breast pads can be used inside your bra. Avoid plastic coated pads that can trap moisture. Wearing patterned clothing, a jacket, vests, sweaters or a long scarf may be helpful.

Mastitis

This is an infection due to incomplete emptying of the breast, fatigue and stress. You are sick and need time to recover. If you feel achy or have flu-like symptoms, call your health care provider. You may need more time to rest, pump or express more often while away from your baby. It is very important to continue to breastfeed while you have mastitis.

Engorgement

This can occur if your baby skips feedings or you and the baby are separated. Your breasts may be warm and hard. You may need to pump more while at work. Warm compresses before feedings or pumping and gentle breast massage toward the nipple may help release your breastmilk and provide relief.



Photo by Denise Pungler, MD, FAAP, IBCLC, www.twofloridadocs.com



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