

Combining Breastfeeding and Work



**GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYERS, EMPLOYED PARENTS AND THEIR CO-WORKERS
ON HOW TO FACILITATE COMBINING BREASTFEEDING AND WORK**

Some useful websites :

www.healthpromotion.ie/breastfeeding

www.ihph.ie/babyfriendlyinitiative

www.babyfriendly.org.uk

www.lalecheleague.org

www.cuidiu-ict.ie

www.breastfedbabies.org

www.ictu.ie/html/publications/ictu/Breastfeeding

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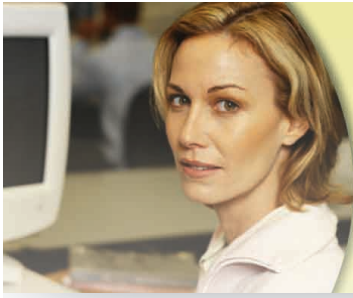
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Combining breastfeeding

SECTION A: For employers and employees

Introduction

Although the number of women who breastfeed their babies is increasing, breastfeeding rates in Ireland are still low compared with other countries. Because of the major health and nutritional advantages of breastfeeding the Department of Health and Children recommends that mothers exclusively breastfeed their babies for the first six months, and after that combine breastfeeding with nourishing spoon feeds and finger foods until their children are two years old or older. This is based on the best research evidence available and is in line with World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF recommendations.

This booklet provides information for employers, employed expectant and new parents and their co-workers on the importance of supporting mothers to continue breastfeeding following their return to work outside the home. It also gives a range of options and suggestions on how to make this easier to achieve.

Why is breastfeeding important?

There are advantages to breastfeeding (or feeding a baby his or her mother's own expressed breast milk) for even short periods. However, research shows that the longer breastfeeding continues the greater the advantages for:

- babies,
- their mothers,
- for employers,

and work



- for the environment
- for the national economy due to health cost savings.

Despite this, almost two thirds of women who begin breastfeeding in Ireland have stopped by the time their baby is 3 months old.

All parents want to do the best for their children. This is why more and more mothers are choosing to breastfeed their babies.

Parents make the decision about how long to continue breastfeeding. It is important that employers and co-workers make it as easy as possible for mothers to continue breastfeeding after returning to paid work.

Combining breastfeeding and work is an important workplace issue because:

- The number of women in the paid workforce has been increasing over recent decades. One of the biggest changes has been the rise in employment among women with young children.
- Making it easier for women to combine the responsibilities of child rearing with paid work can positively influence new mothers' participation in the workforce.
- A breastfeeding mother must either feed her baby or express her breast milk regularly in order to maintain her milk supply. Mothers who are formula feeding their babies do not have a similar requirement.
- Being able to regularly breastfeed or express milk also means breastfeeding mothers avoid breast discomfort while away from their babies.



Advantages of supporting breastfeeding

For employers

Reduced employee absenteeism: As breastfeeding babies and previously breastfed children are healthier, employed parents have to take less time off to care for sick children.

Increased productivity: With reduced absenteeism there is no disruption in team workflow.

Improved staff morale: Employers who support breastfeeding enjoy improved employer- employee relations, resulting in a more motivated, committed and productive workforce.

Lower staff turnover: Breastfeeding mothers are more likely to return to work and more likely to do so earlier if they are supported to continue breastfeeding. This saves the employer staff replacement and training costs.

Positive corporate image: There is greater staff and customer loyalty in employments that take a more family-friendly approach to their employees. This can result in greater productivity, easier employee recruitment, better public goodwill and higher shareholder value.

Cost-benefits: Employers who are already supporting their employees to continue breastfeeding have found the benefits in reduced absenteeism, as well as recruitment cost savings, far outweigh the cost of providing breaks and facilities for breastfeeding.

Advantages of supporting breastfeeding



For employed parents

Best health for baby: There are many advantages for parents and babies if breastfeeding is continued after the mother returns to work outside home. With a healthy baby, parents have fewer trips to the doctor and less medical expenses generally. This cuts down on anxiety over the health and well being of their children leading to a happier and more productive work experience.

Best health for mother: Mothers who breastfeed are at reduced risk of developing health problems such as cancers of the breast and ovaries, and osteoporosis later in life. They also return to their pre-pregnant weight faster.

Free baby food: Breast milk is freely available, which is another positive economic advantage to breastfeeding for families.

Special bonding: Breastfeeding supports bonding between a mother and her baby. Continuing to breastfeed following the return to the workplace allows the continuation of this uniquely special mother-baby bonding relationship.

Less time off work: Breastfed children are healthier in the short, medium and long term, therefore parents of breastfed children are less likely to be absent from work to care for them when they are sick.

Maintain job skills: Research shows that mothers are more likely to return to work and return to work much earlier when they are supported to continue breastfeeding, therefore their job-skills are maintained.



Advantages of supporting breastfeeding

For babies

Perfect food: For a long time it was thought that formula milk was almost as good as breast milk for babies. Research now shows that this is not so. Breast milk is much more easily digested and there are ingredients in breast milk that cannot be reproduced in formula milk. A mother's own breast milk is specially designed to make sure that her baby grows, develops and thrives to his or her full potential.

Optimum health for babies: Babies who are fed their mother's milk are less likely to get illnesses such as gastro-enteritis, ear, chest and kidney infections. Breastfeeding or breast milk feeding also gives some protection from chronic diseases like asthma, eczema, diabetes and obesity, as well as from high blood pressure and heart disease later in life.

Because breastfeeding has health advantages that last long after breastfeeding has stopped, mothers who breastfeed are making an investment in their own and their baby's future health too.

Easy to store and use

Giving a baby his or her mother's own expressed breast milk is the next best thing to breastfeeding. Expressed breast milk is easy to store and can be safely transported in a cool bag. Breast milk keeps for 5 days in a fridge and in a freezer for 3 months. Even at room temperature it does not 'go off' as quickly as other liquid milks or formula.

Advantages of supporting breastfeeding



For society

It reduces health care costs: As breastfeeding gives babies and their mothers protection against a wide range of illnesses, this reduces national healthcare costs and can result in savings to the taxpayer.

It reduces ecological damage: Breastfeeding creates no waste. Increasing breastfeeding rates would lessen the damage to the environment through reduced:

- Production, packaging and distribution of formula milks
- Disposal of tin plate and plastic containers
- Fuel consumption to heat water for making up formula etc.

It has economic value: Breast milk in itself has economic value. A recent Australian study estimated that if all children born there were breastfed or given their mother's own breast milk, the value in health and other cost savings to the economy would be in excess of \$1 billion Australian dollars annually.

It contributes to a healthier workforce in the future: Research shows that babies breastfed in early childhood grow up to be healthier adults. Also, mothers who breastfeed have health advantages that last long after breastfeeding has stopped. This means there are long-term benefits to employers and the whole community because a healthier future workforce means greater productivity and lower national health care costs into the future too.

Some of the advantages of breastfeeding

Breastfed babies are at less risk of:	Breastfeeding mothers are at less risk of:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gastroenteritis ✓ Coughs and colds ✓ Ear infections ✓ Childhood diabetes ✓ Asthma and eczema ✓ Obesity ✓ High blood pressure later in life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Breast cancer ✓ Ovarian cancer ✓ Osteoporosis in later life ✓ Post childbirth obesity –breastfeeding mothers get their pre-pregnant figures back faster and easier.

Breastfed babies also have:	Breastfeeding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Better mental development ✓ Better mouth formation and straighter teeth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Creates a special bond between mother and baby ✓ Is cheaper with no buying of formula and less equipment required.

Benefits to society	Benefits to the environment
Because breastfed babies and their mothers are healthier, health care costs to families and the State are reduced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Breast milk creates no waste

To make the most of these advantages, it is important to continue breastfeeding for as long as possible. The WHO and the Department of Health and Children recommends **exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months** and encourages mothers to continue breastfeeding after that along with nourishing spoon feeds until their children are two years of age or older.

How can employers make combining breastfeeding and work easier?

- To help with the move back into the paid workforce, employers should consider offering employed mothers the following options:
 - Flexible hours
 - Part-time or job-sharing
 - Working from home
- Have a breastfeeding supportive policy and communicate it to all employees (see sample policy statement on page 20)
- Because mothers may be embarrassed asking for breastfeeding facilities and breaks, have a simple procedure for requesting these facilities (see sample application form on page 20).

There are three things needed to help mothers to combine breastfeeding and work outside home. These are:

● Support

- Employers need to adopt a breastfeeding policy that meets the needs of their employees, while also taking account of workplace conditions.
- As part of employment procedures for applying for maternity leave, mothers should be informed of the supports available for breastfeeding on return to work.
- Intranet and other employment communication systems should be used to inform all employees of the importance of promoting breastfeeding and the supports available in their workplace for combining breastfeeding and work.
- Employees need to inform employers as early as possible of their intention to continue breastfeeding following maternity leave. At least four weeks notice should be given. This leaves time for all necessary arrangements to be made.

By promoting and supporting breastfeeding, employers show that they care not just about their employees' health but also the present and future health of their employees' children.

● Time

In an 8-hour working day a period of at least 1 hour is needed to support breastfeeding. This can be divided in a number of ways:

- 1 break of 60 minutes
- 2 breaks of 30 minutes
- 3 breaks of 20 minutes.

The time allocated should increase or decrease depending on whether a longer or shorter day is worked.

How can this time be used to support breastfeeding?

- If the baby is being cared for in an on-site work crèche or in childcare close to the mother's workplace, then she can breastfeed her baby during these breaks.
- The mother may arrange for her child care provider to bring her baby to the workplace breastfeeding room at the designated break times to be breastfed.
- The mother can express and store breast-milk during these breaks when on-site facilities are available. The expressed breast milk can be given to her baby by the childcare provider at a later time,
- Where no facilities for breastfeeding or expressing are available, the mother can have a reduction of working hours by 1 hour each day (per 8 hour working day), without loss of pay. This time can be taken in a number of ways, for example, at the beginning, middle and/or end of her working day.

● Space

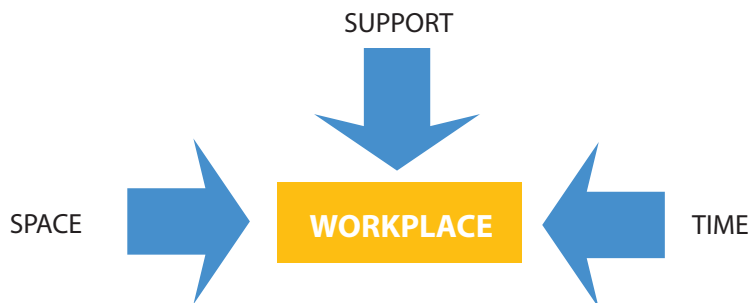
Workplace facilities required

A warm, well-ventilated, lockable room is needed, which is separate from a toilet area. This can be a dual purpose area, for example, the first-aid room.

This room should have:

- A wash-hand basin or sink. If not in the room, one needs to be nearby.
- Comfortable chairs with good back support.
- Changing mat for mothers intending to breastfeed in the room.
- An electric power socket for women using electric breast pumps.
- A small fridge for the purpose of storing expressed breast milk. If a separate fridge is not available, mothers can use individual cool bags to store and transport their expressed breast milk containers. If it is necessary to share a fridge then the expressed milk containers should be placed in a clean plastic box with a lid, which has the mother's name on it, and then placed on a high shelf in the shared fridge-not on the door of the fridge.
- A clean table or work surface for the sterilised equipment and pumps.
- A lockable cupboard to store personal breast pumps is also desirable.
- Mothers who choose to express their milk should provide themselves with a breast pump or sterile jug (if hand expressing) plastic bottles or bags for holding breast milk and a supply of labels on which to write their name and the date and time the milk is expressed.

If employers decide to provide an electric breast pump for the use of their employees, each mother using it will need to purchase her own attachment kit for use with this specific model of pump (eg. suction-cup, collection bottles, tubing etc), and take responsibility for ensuring her individual fittings are washed and sterilised before use.



SECTION B:

For employed new parents and expectant parents

How can parents make combining breastfeeding and work easier?

From early on in your pregnancy it is likely you will be considering your options and making arrangements for child-care following your maternity leave. Everyone's circumstances are different and it is important that the arrangements you make suit your work-life balance needs.

It may be helpful to talk to other mothers who have combined breastfeeding with work outside the home. If you can, talk it over with someone from your own workplace who has or is combining breastfeeding and work. Your public health nurse will also be able to offer advice and support. Attending local breastfeeding support groups before and after your baby is born will also give you an opportunity to discuss the practical issues involved with breastfeeding counsellors and other breastfeeding mothers. Contact details for your nearest La Leche League or Cuidiú-Irish Childbirth Trust breastfeeding support groups or other support groups in your area, are available at local health centres or check the telephone directory for these.

Choosing childcare

Choose your childcare facility or provider very carefully. Your public health nurse will be able to give you advice about this. The public health nurse can also provide you with information about childcare facilities in your area that meet professionally recognised standards of care.

Try to organise childcare close to work or on your route to work. This will mean it will take less time bringing your baby to and from childcare.

Tell your childcare provider that you are breastfeeding and that you intend to continue breastfeeding when you return to work.

Because of this you may need to:

- Breastfeed after you arrive at the crèche with your baby in the morning or in the evening before you leave.
- Have your childcare provider give your baby your expressed breast milk.

It is important to check that your childcare provider knows how to safely store, thaw (should the need arise) and give expressed breast milk.

If you intend to have your baby brought to you at work in order to breastfeed, you will need to arrange this with your childcare provider well in advance.

Before returning to work, leave your baby for short periods with your childcare provider on a few occasions. This will help your baby and the childcare provider get to know each other and get used to the arrangements you have made. It can be very helpful to do a few morning 'test runs' before your maternity leave is over to get used to the time it will take to get your baby ready, to bring him or her to the crèche and to get to work.

What do I tell my childcare provider about using my expressed breast milk?

- To use correct hygiene and sterilisation procedures as with handling and feeding all baby milks.
- Not to thaw or warm expressed breast milk in a microwave oven, to place the container in warm water instead.
- To refrigerate but not refreeze thawed breast milk and to throw away any thawed breast milk if not used within 24 hours.
- To always check the name and date on your breast milk before giving it to your baby and to use the oldest dated milk first.
- As with other baby milks, to throw away the leftovers following an individual feed.
- Not to use or thaw too much expressed breast milk for individual feeds.

Also tell your childcare provider well in advance whether you would like

your baby to be fed your expressed breast milk by cup or bottle. If you decide you want your baby to be cup fed make sure that the childcare provider (and other staff) knows how to give cup feeds to a young baby.

How can I breastfeed at work?

1. Some workplaces provide on site crèches for their employees. If there is a crèche at your place of work try and book your baby into it. If your baby is cared for in a workplace crèche or in a crèche very close to work, then you can opt to go there to breastfeed him or her during your breastfeeding breaks at work.

OR

2. You may arrange for your baby to be brought to your place of work by your childcare provider so that you can breastfeed in the room provided for breastfeeding breaks.

OR

3. You can choose to express breast milk during breastfeeding breaks at work. Your childcare provider can give your expressed breast milk to your baby at a later time. If you plan to express breast milk while at work, practice expressing by hand and pump for some weeks before you intend going back to work and decide on the way that works best for you.
- When your baby is over 6 weeks old start giving an occasional feed (about once or twice a week) of expressed breast milk from a cup or bottle so that he or she gets used to taking your milk in this way. It is useful if your partner or another family member or friend gives these first expressed breast milk feeds as some babies can at first refuse to take feeds from their mothers any other way than directly from the breast.
 - If you choose not to breastfeed or express when you are at work you can still continue to breastfeed when you are with your baby. If this is your choice, your baby can be given infant formula during the day while you are at work and you can resume breastfeeding in the evenings and at the weekends. Your milk supply may drop a little if you do this but it usually adapts to the changes in demand.

Note: Babies receive similar health benefits whether they are being breastfed or getting their mothers expressed breast milk from a bottle or cup.

Regardless of how much you have prepared for it, going back to work can be quite stressful, especially if it involves leaving your baby for most of the day. If it is possible, return to work gradually, or on a part-time basis to begin with. Discuss with your employer or line manager your options for flexible hours or a shorter working day in the early months.

Expressing breast milk

You can express your milk either by hand or by using a breast pump.

Hand expression

You will have been shown how to hand express by the midwives in the maternity unit. If you need further information about how this is done ask your public health nurse (in the local health centre) or contact your local La Leche League or Cuidiú-Irish Childbirth Trust breastfeeding counsellor. Information is also available in the 'Breastfeeding your Baby' leaflet, obtainable from the midwives in your maternity unit and from your public health nurse.

Pump expression

There are two types of pumps available, hand pumps and electric pumps. The hand pumps can be manual or battery-operated. These are available to buy in baby stores, pharmacies and by mail order. Some of the more expensive electric pumps can also be rented. If you are going to buy a pump ask the advice of your midwife, public health nurse or local breastfeeding support group on the most suitable models available. All pumps come with containers and suction cups that fit over the nipple and areola (the dark skinned area around the nipple). When using hand pumps you use a rhythm of sucking similar to your baby's rhythm. When using electric pumps this rhythm is established automatically.

It is a good idea to spend some time practising expressing your milk before going back to work. Try expressing after a breastfeed at home. You may not get much milk to start with but creating an extra demand over a few feeds will gradually result in an increase in supply. Some mothers practice by expressing from one breast while the baby feeds from the other breast. The milk expressed can be stored for later use.

Decide on the method you are going to use to sterilise the equipment needed to express –suction cups, containers etc. There are a number of options:

- chemical (eg. sterilising tablets or liquid diluted in cold water)
- Steam sterilisation
- Boiling all equipment for 10 minutes

Always wash all equipment thoroughly before sterilising.

What do I need to express at work?

A warm lockable private room with a comfortable chair. Somewhere quiet is ideal. If a specially assigned breastfeeding room is not available at your place of work discuss with your employer or line manager what dual purpose or other room might be suitable before returning to work. The toilet area is not a suitable place.

The room should have hand washing facilities nearby and a clean area where you can safely put or store your sterilised equipment and pump. If you are using an electric pump, access to an electric power point will be necessary. Either a fridge and/or a well-insulated cool-bag containing ice blocks (that have been frozen overnight-the rigid blocks are best as they can be washed and do not leak) is also needed for the safe storage and transporting of expressed breast milk. If storing expressed breast milk in a cool bag during the day and when transporting breast milk home, keep the cool bag away from heat sources. Newspapers can provide extra insulation if needed.

All of the above might not be available in your workplace. A creative and flexible approach may be needed by both the employed mother and her employer in negotiating individual arrangements.

Here's a handy checklist for expressing

- ✓ Wash your hands thoroughly before expressing.
- ✓ Have everything you need to hand:
 1. Sterile wide-necked collecting container (if hand expressing),
 2. Sterile glass or plastic storage bottles or bags and labels. Pumps come with their own milk collection containers that screw off after use. These + the bottle tops and suction cup must be sterilised before use,
 3. Tissues,
 4. A glass of water or soft drink.
- ✓ Many mothers like to have a photo or an item of their baby's clothes to help them focus on their baby while expressing. Some like to listen to soothing music or a recording of their baby's sounds to help relaxation and stimulate milk flow.
- ✓ Minimise distractions by making sure you are in as quiet an area as possible, or use a personal stereo/CD player/radio to block out background noise.
- ✓ Make sure you are sitting comfortably with good back support.
- ✓ Breathe deeply, relax and think about your baby.
- ✓ Begin by expressing from the first breast until the flow of milk slows or stops. You then change to the second breast. When the milk slows on the second breast go back to the first breast and begin again. Keep changing breasts like this until your milk reduces to only a few drops or stops altogether from both breasts. The time this takes can vary between 10 and 30 minutes.
- ✓ Whichever method of breast milk expression you choose, the milk may take a minute or two to flow after you start expressing.

Other issues to consider

- When using a pump, make sure the nipple is in the centre of the suction cup and that the cup has good skin contact all around to prevent air entering. If your nipple hurts when you start expressing with the pump, then stop and check to make sure the nipple is in the centre of the suction cup. On some pumps you can adjust the suction pressure if it feels too strong or too weak. Keep the kit upright whilst expressing to prevent milk from entering the tubing.

- Some electric pumps have two suction cups that allow you to pump from both breasts at the same time. This can cut down on the time needed to express. These electric pumps can be very expensive (to buy or hire) but some employers may decide to supply one of these electric pumps for use by a number of employees. Attachment sets for these pumps can be bought separately so that many mothers can use the same pump. If several mothers are using the same electric pump each mother must be responsible for washing and sterilising her own attachment set (eg. suction cups, containers, lids, tubing etc.) after each use and if this is done correctly a communal pump can be safely and effectively used in a workplace situation. For hygiene reasons there should be no sharing of suction cups, containers or tubing. Always read and follow the manufacturers instructions that come with your breast pump.
- Sterilized equipment can be safely transported to work in a clean plastic sandwich box with a tight fitting lid.

How much do I need to express?

Express as much as you can at each break. The amount expressed can vary considerably. Don't worry if you think it is too little or if there is a big difference in amounts expressed on different days and times. The amount of milk your baby needs or wants varies too. If necessary the milk from a few expressions can be combined to make up single feed amounts.

It is also helpful to keep an extra top or blouse and some breast pads at work in case of leakages.

Important things to remember:

1. Put your name on the container and the date and time milk has been placed in it.
2. Use a separate container each pumping session. Fresh milk batches, once cooled in the fridge, can be safely combined to make up full feeds.
3. Storing your milk in single feed amounts can mean less waste –about 100mls-200mls per feed depending on the age of your baby.
4. Breast milk remains fresh for 5 days if refrigerated. Freeze extra milk as soon as possible if you know it is not going to be needed within the following few days. Breast milk will keep for 3 months in a freezer. It is useful to have some frozen breast milk stored for unexpected occasions.

5. **As far as possible try and have fresh cooled (refrigerated) expressed milk available for your baby rather than routinely freezing and thawing milk.**
6. When left standing or during storage there may be some slight alteration in colour or a separation of breast milk contents, for example it may be watery on the top and thicker on the bottom. These changes are perfectly normal and a gentle shake of the container before giving it to your baby is all that is necessary.

How do I safely use and store breast milk?

Breast milk can be safely stored:

- At room temperature (19 to 22°C) for 6 hours. If you do not plan to give your baby your expressed breast milk within this time you should put it in a cool bag containing previously frozen ice blocks or put in a fridge immediately after expressing it.
- In a fridge (4°C or lower) for up to 5 days – on a high shelf and to the back of the fridge.
- In an ice-box compartment inside a refrigerator for up to 2 weeks - this reduced time is due to the variations in temperature caused by the frequent opening and closing of fridge doors.
- In a self-contained freezer compartment with a separate door (-20°C) for up to 3 months. Place the expressed breast milk at the back of the freezer.

How to warm the milk

- Heat refrigerated milk by placing the container in warm water.
- Frozen milk can be thawed overnight in a fridge or by placing the container in warm water. Keep thawed breast milk in the fridge until needed and use within 24 hours. Once previously refrigerated or frozen milk has been warmed ready for feeding, it should be used within 1 hour or thrown away. Breast milk should never be refrozen.
- Do not use a microwave oven to heat or thaw breast milk. It can destroy valuable ingredients in the milk and cause hot spots, which can burn your baby's mouth.
- Gently shake the heated breast milk container and test the temperature of the milk before feeding.

SAMPLE FORM FOR REQUESTING BREASTFEEDING BREAKS

Name of Company/ Business/ Employer _____

Name of Employee: _____

Expected date of birth of baby/Date of birth of baby: _____

I confirm that I will be/am breastfeeding my child and I intend availing of breastfeeding facilities and breaks available.

Due date of return to work: _____

My preferred way of taking these breaks are:

1 x 60 minute break 2 x 30 minute break 3 x 20 minute breaks

My preference would be to:

1. Arrange to have my baby brought to me for breastfeeding during these breaks.
2. Express breast milk during these breaks.
3. Go to my childcare provider to breastfeed during these breaks.

I declare that the information given above is true and complete. I confirm that when I cease to breastfeed my child I will notify you accordingly

Signature of Employee: _____

PPS No. _____ Date: _____

SAMPLE WORKPLACE BREASTFEEDING POLICY STATEMENT

COMPANY LOGO

We,, recognise the importance of breastfeeding and undertake to promote and support breastfeeding by providing the facilities and supports necessary to enable mothers in our workforce to combine breastfeeding with their work.

Facilities and supports include:

- The provision of breastfeeding breaks. The timing of these paid breaks can be negotiated between the employed breastfeeding mother and her line manager or supervisor.
- For the purposes of breastfeeding or breast milk expression access will be provided to a clean, private room with power points, lockable door, comfortable chairs, a table, hand washing facilities, a fridge (where possible), a secure breast pump storage area, as well as the use of a company provided electric breast pump (where possible).
- Access to breastfeeding resources. Employees who are pregnant or considering parenthood will be provided with the booklet 'Combining Breastfeeding and Work' along with information on maternity leave/parental leave entitlements and work life balance information.
- Flexible work options. Employed expectant and new mothers can negotiate flexible work options (such as flex-time, part-time, job-sharing and home-based work) with her employer, taking into account both the employee's and organisation's needs.

All employees will be made aware of this policy.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENT
S.I. No. 654 of 2004
REGULATIONS

Maternity Protection (Protection of Mothers who are Breastfeeding) Regulations 2004

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I, Michael Mc Dowell, T.D., Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, in exercise of the powers conferred on me by section 15B (inserted by section 9 of the Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act 2004 (No. 28 of 2004)) of the Maternity Protection Act 1994 (No. 34 of 1994) and the Equality and Law Reform (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order (S.I. No. 297 of 1997) (as adapted by the Justice (Alteration of Name of Department and Title of Minister) Order 1997 (S.I. No. 298 of 1997)), hereby make the following regulations:

1. (1) These Regulations may be cited as the Maternity Protection (Protection of Mothers who are Breastfeeding) Regulations 2004.
(2) These Regulations shall come into operation on 18 October 2004.
2. In these Regulations -
"employee who is breastfeeding" means at any time an employee whose date of confinement was not more than twenty-six weeks earlier, who is breastfeeding and who has informed her employer of her condition;
"part-time employee" has the meaning assigned to it by section 7 of the Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act 2001 (No. 45 of 2001);
"Principal Act" means Maternity Protection Act 1994 (No. 34 of 1994).
3. (1) An employee who is breastfeeding and to whom subsection (1)(a) of section 15B of the Principal Act applies shall be entitled, without loss of pay, to take 1 hour off from her work each working day as a breastfeeding break which may be taken -
 - (a) in the form of -
 - (i) one break of 60 minutes,
 - (ii) two breaks of 30 minutes each,
 - (iii) three breaks of 20 minutes each, or
 - (b) in such other manner as to number and duration of breaks as may be agreed by her and her employer.(2) An employee who is breastfeeding and to whom subsection (1)(b) of section 15B of the Principal Act applies shall be entitled, without loss of pay, to have her working hours reduced by 1 hour each working day and that reduction may comprise one period of 60 minutes, two periods of 30 minutes each, 3 periods of 20 minutes each or such other periods as may be agreed by her and her employer.
4. Time off from work, or a reduction in working hours, for breastfeeding in accordance with subsections (1)(a) and (1)(b) respectively of section 15B of the Principal Act and these Regulations shall be calculated on a pro rata basis for a part-time employee who is breastfeeding.
5. When an employee who is breastfeeding proposes to exercise her entitlement to time off from work or a reduction of working hours under subsection (1)(a) or (1)(b), as the case may be, of section 15B of the Principal Act, she shall -
 - (a) notify her employer in writing of the proposal as soon as reasonably practicable but not later than the latest date specified in subsection (1), (1A) or (1B), as may be appropriate, of section 28 of the Principal Act for her to notify her employer under that section of her intention to return to work and of the date on which she expects to return to work, and
 - (b) furnish, if so requested by her employer, the birth certificate of the child concerned or any other document establishing the date of birth of the child.

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