

Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Space Recommendations

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This information is adapted from a report prepared by New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition detailing recommendations for creating a breastfeeding-friendly space and relevant laws and guidelines about breastfeeding in a childcare setting in August 2020 as part of the New Jersey Child Nutrition Fund (NJCNF). These recommendations are suitable for both child care centers and family child care homes and will support breastfeeding, chestfeeding and exclusively pumping parents.

I. General Guidance and Considerations

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program and breastfeeding authorities, the following amenities are needed to accommodate a parent of an infant who wishes to breastfeed or express milk to leave for the infant in a childcare facility:

- Space of sufficient size that can be made private
- Comfortable chair
- Stool for mom's feet to help support her back while breastfeeding
- Pillow (with cover that can be sanitized) to support the baby
- Table conveniently placed to rest pumping equipment
- Electrical outlet for the breast pump
- Disinfectant wipes
- Nearby sink for handwashing and drinking water
- Access to a nearby refrigerator to store the expressed milk for eventual infant feeding

Most parents prefer privacy for breastfeeding and pumping breast milk, so it is essential to offer privacy features to ensure that all parents are comfortable. These privacy features and all furniture and amenities used to accommodate breastfeeding parents must be easy to clean, to follow current cleaning and disinfecting recommendations of the U.S. Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC has recommended that the same cleaning protocols be applied to lactation rooms as to other facilities and these are consistent with guidelines provided by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families for child care centers.

However, it must be noted that not all parents seek a private place to breastfeed. Some are comfortable breastfeeding in a room with others present. Under New Jersey law, a mother may breastfeed her baby in any location of a place of public accommodation or amusement where she is allowed to be. Like a school, a childcare facility is considered a "place of public accommodation," so that a mother is entitled to breastfeed in a room where her child is being cared for if she is otherwise allowed to be present there. N.J.S. A. 26:4B-4. Thus, a mother must be permitted to breastfeed in the open in a child care center in a space where she is permitted. In that case, the mother can still use the lactation space while leaving the privacy features open or another public space where she is permitted within the facility.

In addition, New Jersey law requires employers to provide reasonable break time and a private place that's not a toilet to pump in proximity to the work area. N.J.S.A. 10:5-12 Thus, a lactation space must be available to child care staff as well as breastfeeding families. There is no time limit on this accommodation, so these requirements still apply if the employee wishes to continue pumping past the infant's first birthday.

II. Recommended Items and Estimated Cost

A. PRIVATE LACTATION SPACE

It is recommended that a feeding and milk expression space be made available near where babies are cared for and located to follow any social distancing guidelines that may be in effect. There are no universally recognized guidelines about the required size of the lactation space, but it must be sufficient to fit a chair, a table and a footstool. A space of at least 4 feet by 4 feet will accommodate those needs. Either a nearby room that can be made available to lactating parents when necessary or a comfortable area of the infant and toddler care rooms can provide a suitable lactation space.

- If using a section of the infant and toddler care rooms, privacy can be provided by the following features: Portable screens that can be stored when not needed
- Privacy curtains hung from ceiling mounts



PRIVACY SCREENS. To create a private space in an existing child care area, the safest and most practical options are stable, portable, vinyl or fabric screens that can be cleaned with sanitizing cleaners. Examples of such screens are [here](#) and [here](#). The size and number of screens needed will depend on whether an existing wall or corner space will be used for the lactation space. An additional screen may be overlapped for added privacy. These screens can also be stored when the lactation area is not in use.

PRIVACY CURTAINS. Flame-resistant, washable curtains mounted to the ceiling could also be used to provide privacy. They should be cleaned as needed according to current cleaning standards. An example of such curtains is found here: <https://www.amazon.com/Hospital-Curtain-Cubicle-Medical-Curtains/dp/B07JPKDZTS?th=1>. The cost of a 9' wide curtain is \$109-\$119 depending on height. Antimicrobial hospital curtains are also available, but companies must be contacted directly for price estimates. These curtains may be hung from curved/flexible ceiling track or curved curtain rod suspended from the ceiling. An example of curved ceiling track is here: <https://www.medicalproductsdirect.com/flexible-curtain-track-8-foot.html>. Cost: \$79. The curtain track would need to be installed at an extra cost.

B. FURNISHINGS

CHAIR AND TABLE. The breastfeeding chair should be a cushioned armchair with good back support. The table can have a small top and may be foldable. Due to the need to clean the furniture between uses, Polyurethane/vinyl upholstery for the chair and a nonporous surface for the table would be the most practical choices, but upholstered chairs may also be used. A chair may also have a built-in desktop. Some examples of chair and table arrangements are pictured below.



Cost estimate: \$150 - \$400
(Chairs with attached table are at higher price range.)

Photo: US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Women's Health.

Photo: Smart Start Academy.

Many small, stable and durable side tables in various colors are available that fold up or not depending on child care facility preference. Examples of tables are below.



Available at Staples [here](#). Cost: \$23.99



Available at Amazon [here](#). Cost: \$49.99



Available at Home Depot [here](#). Cost: \$36.71

FOOTSTOOL. A low, easily cleanable, durable footstool will best serve the breastfeeding mother. Wooden footstools designed for breastfeeding are a good choice. A replaceable plastic cover (like a large plastic hair shower cap) may be applied for added ability to clean. Examples of two such stools are picture below.



My Brest Friend Adjustable Stool
Available at Amazon [here](#) or at Buy Buy Baby [here](#). Cost: \$24.99.



Prime Products 320401 RV Foot Valet Stool Available at Walmart [here](#). Cost: \$18.11

PILLOWS. A standard soft bed pillow is appropriate for this use at an average cost of \$6-\$10. The pillow should have a cover that can be cleaned with disinfectant wipes. Heavy duty zippered vinyl pillow protectors work for this purpose, a cloth pillowcase that the center launders or that parents supply their own use can be used over the plastic cover

The following is the estimated total cost of creating one breastfeeding space, exclusive of taxes, shipping costs and the possible installation cost if the curtain option is chosen:

Estimated Cost of Creating One Private Breastfeeding Space

ITEM	LOW PRICE ESTIMATE*	HIGH PRICE ESTIMATE*
Privacy curtains with track or portable screens:	\$200	\$200
Breastfeeding chair	\$150	\$400
End table	\$24	\$50
Stool	\$18	\$25
Pillow and protectors	\$15	\$19
Total estimated cost for one breastfeeding space:	\$414	\$694

**prices exclude installation costs, taxes, and shipping.*

To welcome breastfeeding families and reap the increased health benefits that follow from higher breastfeeding rates among its facility’s families, child care providers should create a private, effective and practical breastfeeding space in or near the infant room. Accommodating breastfeeding and human milk feeding families is a win-win strategy that not only promotes health, but also provides economic benefits to centers that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program.



Here is one example of a private lactation space within an infant room at Smart Start Academy, a childcare center located in Tom's River, New Jersey. Smart Start Academy partnered with the New Jersey Breastfeeding Coalition and received consultation to become a more breastfeeding-friendly center in August 2020, with support from the New Jersey Child Nutrition Fund.

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