

Wood County, Wisconsin, Childcare Providers Remove Breastfeeding Barriers

by: Amber France & Kelli Stader

SUMMARY

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Wood County Health Department, and the Wood County Breastfeeding Coalition worked together to develop the Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare Provider Program. The program provides technical assistance and funding to help childcare centers remove barriers to breastfeeding—such as a lack of staff education or inadequate breastfeeding facilities. The goal is to increase the number of moms still using breast milk as the child's main source of nutrition until the child is 1 year of age or older.



CHALLENGE

Breastfeeding can provide long lasting health benefits for children and mothers. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 80% of Wisconsin moms start breastfeeding when their infants are born. However, by the time the child is 6 months old, 53% of moms are still breastfeeding at all, and only 24% of babies receive breast milk exclusively at 6 months old. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for about the first 6 months of a baby's life, followed by breastfeeding in combination with the introduction of complementary foods until

at least 12 months of age. Continuation of breastfeeding for as long as mutually desired by mother and baby. Childcare centers in Wood County, Wisconsin, may contribute to barriers for breastfeeding working mothers, by lacking breastfeeding policies, not having storage facilities for breast milk, or lacking adequate breastfeeding or pumping facilities.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

Learn more about the 10 Steps to Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare Center Toolkit. Online training modules, an action plan template, and more can be found at the Wood County Breastfeeding website. The site also lists breastfeeding-friendly childcare centers in Wood County, ways childcare centers can develop their own breastfeeding-friendly policies, and contact information for local technical assistance. For more information, visit <http://woodcountybreastfeeding.org/>.

"After the implementation of the Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare Provider Program, childcare providers reported parents were now seeking out breastfeeding-friendly providers, and some of those childcare providers now have waiting lists. This shows the program had a community-wide impact."

- Amber France, Nutrition and Lactation Program Supervisor

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SOLUTION

The Wood County Health Department created the Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare Provider Program, in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and the Wisconsin Breastfeeding Coalition. The program provides a clear, ten-step process childcare providers can follow to better support breastfeeding moms. Upon completion of the ten steps, the childcare provider becomes listed with their Child Care Resources & Referral Agency as breastfeeding-friendly. Examples of steps include—to designate a breastfeeding policy lead person or team, develop policies for current staff and parents, create a breastfeeding room or space, and continue yearly education for staff to keep the designation.

RESULTS

The Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare Provider Program was created in 16 pilot sites in Wood County. All 16 have developed breastfeeding policies and have been designated breastfeeding-friendly. According to data collected from all 16 sites using the Go Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) Breastfeeding & Infant Feeding tool, conditions for breastfeeding moms improved. For example, most sites have a quiet and comfortable space—other than a bathroom—for mothers to breastfeed or express milk. Childcare providers also increased refrigerator and freezer space to allow breastfeeding mothers to store milk. Posters and handouts provide parents with information about the importance of breastfeeding. Better educated staff now look for specific hunger signs—such as rooting—rather than feeding only on schedules, because scheduled feedings can lead to uncomfortable overfeeding and reflux for babies.

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Contact CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/requestform.html>

Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Three additional communities piloted the Breastfeeding-Friendly Childcare Provider Program, with positive results. The program is also being adopted by local breastfeeding coalitions and the Wisconsin Department of Health Services—Maternal & Child Health Section. The ultimate goal is to take the program statewide. DHS and Wood County Health Department continue to provide additional technical assistance, presentations, and training for counties initiating the program. Additional statewide data about the program is being collected.

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