

Breastfeeding Friendly Public Places in St. Croix County

Families with young children continue to be a growing section of St. Croix County with approximately 1000 babies born each year to county residents. Recent reports show that nearly 75% of new mothers in Wisconsin choose to breastfeed. Breastfeeding is a natural part of motherhood. Breastfeeding gives children the healthiest start in life and provides important health benefits for mothers as well. Unfortunately, many women do not breastfeed very long despite their initial goals and the medical recommendations.

Today's mothers are out and about with their children, actively involved in our communities. Wisconsin statutes protect mothers' rights to breastfeed their children in public in Wisconsin. However, some mothers still find "breastfeeding in public" to be a challenge for continuing breastfeeding. St. Croix County communities are encouraged to recognize the law locally and increase support for breastfeeding in public places (retail stores, restaurants, schools, libraries, recreational facilities, churches and other public areas).

Breastfeeding Friendly Suggestions

Educate the staff and public

- Display "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" signs/posters/window clings at the entrance of the building.
- Educate staff (and the public) on Wisconsin Statute 253.16. Pocket cards can be available.
- Offer guidance for staff on how to positively respond to concerns toward breastfeeding such as: "Families are important to our community and breastfeeding is welcome here." OR "In Wisconsin, mothers have a right to breastfeed. We are glad they are taking such good care of their children." DO NOT prohibit or restrict a mother from breastfeeding, ask her to leave, or ask her to cover up while she attempts to feed her child.
- Consider a breastfeeding policy so support is consistent.

Provide comfortable seating options

- Seating away from high traffic areas and main entrances are considerate.
- Breastfeeding mothers often have other children to monitor. Seating near areas which are engaging for other children is helpful. If a child friendly/play area isn't available, creating one could be an option.

Give mothers a choice

- Sometimes new mothers need a private area for breastfeeding or pumping to express breastmilk. A bathroom is not an appropriate area for this activity. Plan ahead on how to accommodate privacy requests.

Offer special programming or an event

- Depending on the type of public space available, World Breastfeeding Awareness Week (August 1-7) can be celebrated. Special outreach or displays can be created and shared with the public. Breastfeeding support should be considered with other family friendly activities/events.

Please contact St. Croix County DHHS-Public Health for more information and to be recognized as "Breastfeeding Friendly" by the St. Croix County Breastfeeding Coalition.