The Affordable Care Act has made breastfeeding and pumping a real option for most mothers, especially those who decide to go back to work. Going back to work can be an overwhelming experience for parents, but knowing there are health care laws to support breastfeeding mothers can ease some of the concerns. Under most health insurance plans preventative services, including the costs related to breastfeeding supplies and support, are covered.

1. Most health care plans must cover the cost of breastfeeding supplies, such as breast pumps, without co-pays or additional fees.

2. Throughout the duration of breastfeeding, mothers may access lactation counseling with a trained specialist, such as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) or Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC), without co-pays or additional fees.

3. Medicaid requirements related to breastfeeding vary by state. Some, but not all, states and types of Medicaid coverage may cover breastfeeding support and supplies.

For breastfeeding mothers going back to work, many employers must provide:

4. Mothers a “reasonable” amount of time to pump throughout the day.

5. Women a clean and private space to pump or nurse their baby. This cannot be a space within a bathroom.

To determine if a health insurance plan covers breastfeeding supplies and support without associated costs, please see the flowchart on the following page.

Sources:

How to Support Breastfeeding Mothers

Remind ECE programs that the video shown within the Breastfeeding segment of the Learning Session is a great resource for ECE program staff!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IpDDxnb7c

Questions?
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Success Story from New Jersey

A breastfeeding success story from Beachwood Nursery School in Beachwood, New Jersey

“Our school opened in 1986 providing early education to children 3-5 years old. In 2010, we opened an infant/toddler/twos program. As a NAECY Accredited center, we have always had an established breast feeding policy but I believe since we’ve been apart of the NJ ECELC this year, we’ve extended our breastfeeding support. Some policies that have always been in place and supported in our program that we would always accommodate a mother who chose to breastfeed her baby. This support included encouraging mothers to breastfeed on their work breaks and/or lunch breaks if it was convenient for them. We invited the moms to come and sit in the infant room if they preferred to breastfeed at the school. We also have established a policy on storing breast milk completely separate from formula, so 2 different refrigerators. This year, a mom stored her frozen breast milk supply for her baby. She would typically leave enough for 1-2 days & our teachers would thaw it following the appropriate guidelines. But one really great success story is working with our own staff. Two years ago, our pre-k teacher had her baby in October. When she returned in January, she continued to breastfeed her son. Together, We were able to work out a schedule that accommodated her sons feeding schedule. She would come in a few minutes early before her scheduled time so she could breastfeed, then it worked where she took her lunch break & was able to breastfeed again & then finally, she was able to feed him one more time before they got in the car to go home [...]. Our staff receives training on our breastfeeding policies including our preschool prekindergarten teachers since we feel it is important for all staff to have at least a general understanding.

So the one big change we are making this summer because of our involvement with the NJ ECELC is creating a private space for a mother to breastfeed. I’m actually vacating my office to create a calm and peaceful space for a breastfeeding mother. This space could also dual as a great parent-teacher meeting room as well but we thought it was important to be able to have this area.”

- Michelle Newman-Keenan, Director/Owner


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