



Promote a Family-Friendly Workplace

WHY this is important

Family-friendly workplaces are fundamental to the well-being of employees and their families. They support healthy community objectives such as age-friendly environments, thriving children and economic stability for families.

Family-friendly policies and practices are also wins for employers by reducing costs associated with turnover through employee retention and supporting recruitment efforts. While there are many types of family-friendly policies and practices, we focus on two specific categories here – breastfeeding-friendly workplaces and support for caregivers and parents.

HOW to support this outcome

- **Become a breastfeeding-friendly workplace.**

Employees who breastfeed receive important health advantages, including reduced risk for breast cancer, ovarian cancer and type 2 diabetes. Infants who are breastfed have reduced risk of many health conditions, including asthma, obesity, diabetes and gastrointestinal infections. Employees need to know that when they return to work they have a place to feed their babies or pump breast milk. Active support from the worksite and management is essential for an employee's successful transition back to the workplace. Employers also benefit significantly from supporting breastfeeding employees through decreased employee turnover, and reduced absenteeism and health care costs.

Education and Awareness:

- Provide lactation education through flyers, classes or other venues.

On-Site Support:

- Provide a clean, private space (that is not a bathroom) for expressing breast milk.

Policy Change:

- Establish a written policy that states your company's support of a parent's choice to breastfeed.
- Allow the use of flexible time and breaks for expressing breast milk.

- **Support caregivers and parents.**

The majority of people will participate in caregiving at some point, either in caring of their own children or sick or aging family members. Supporting employees who are caregivers or parents has benefits beyond employee wellness. Family-friendly work policies have been recognized as a core approach to preventing child abuse and neglect (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention). Policies and practices that support caregivers can promote gender equality. They also support healthy aging.

- **Support caregivers and parents (continued).**

Education and Awareness:

- Share community resources for elder care or provide discounts for elder care.
- Share resources, make referrals or provide discounts for child care.
- Provide educational opportunities on family-related topics, such as parenting, elder care, emotional support for caregivers.
- Translate resources and work with organizations that support Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) Vermonters to provide culturally-appropriate education and support.

On-Site Support:

- Offer on-site childcare.
- Allow children at the workplace.
- Invite family members to organization events.

Policy change:

- Make arrangements with local child care centers to reserve spots for employees' children.
- Allow flex-time for caregiving and child care needs.
- Allow employees to telework.
- Ensure managers are trained on supporting employees.
- Consider an Infants in the Workplace policy for positions that allow it.
- Ensure leave policies support the caregiving needs of employees, for example:
 - Offer paid parental leave for new parents.
 - Offer family medical leave to care for family members.
 - Offer a set number of days for emergency leave for medical or other emergencies.
 - Allow the use of paid sick leave for family care.
- Make sure leave policies are clearly explained in new employee orientation and all employees know how to apply for leave.
- Provide support for filling out forms when needed. Employees that are English Language Learners or have a disability may need extra support.

WHERE to go for resources

- Family-Friendly Workplaces: healthvermont.gov/wellness/worksite-wellness/promote-family-friendly-workplace
- Supporting caregivers:
 - Let's Grow Kids: letsgrowkids.org
 - Child Care Benefits Resource Guide (sample policy templates, information about FSA's, HRAs, and HSAs): <https://letsgrowkids.org/child-care-benefits>
 - Child Care Resources for Families (for employees who need help finding and paying for child care): https://letsgrowkids.org/client_media/files/CC%20Resources%20for%20Families.pdf
 - AARP: aarp.org/work/employers/caregiving-resources/

Toolkit ▶ *Sample Breastfeeding Policy Template*

For more info ▶ The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you: www.healthvermont.gov/local.