



Sandusky County Child Development Center Shows Support for Breastfeeding Families

At a Glance

Sandusky County Public Health's (SCPH) Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program and Angie's Angels Child Development Center in Fremont are working to improve breastfeeding rates among employees and visitors by providing a supportive environment with policies that encourage continued breastfeeding after returning to work postpartum. The needs of the center were addressed through the establishment of lactation support guidelines and the creation of a comfortable, private lactation room.

Public Health Challenge

Breastfeeding is one of the most highly effective preventive measures a mother can take to protect the health of her infant. It can address many short- and long-term health issues for both mother and baby. Infants who are breastfed

have reduced risks for conditions such as obesity and type 1 diabetes. Breastfeeding can also help lower a mother's risk of developing high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and different types of cancers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants be fed breast milk exclusively for the first six months after birth. In Sandusky County, one in four mothers with children ages 0-5 years never breastfed their child; 31% only breastfed for three months or less. Mothers are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. labor force. Approximately 70% of employed mothers with children younger than 3 years old work full-time. One-third of these mothers return to work within three months after birth, and two-thirds return within six months. Though the federal Break Time for Nursing Mothers law requires employers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

to provide basic accommodations for breastfeeding mothers at work, many mothers still lack the support they need.

Approach

SCPH's CHC program partnered with Angie's Angels Child Development Center to increase lactation support for both visitors and employees. Prior to making improvements, a pre-assessment survey was conducted to better understand the lactation support needs at the center. Employees and visitors expressed the need for a comfortable, private lactation room; a place to store breastmilk; flexible milk expression breaks; breast pumps; and educational materials. CHC program staff and the executive director of Angie's Angels developed and carried out both policy and environmental improvement plans for breastfeeding support. This included developing and adopting Lactation Support Guidelines



and establishing a comfortable, private space designated for lactation. Following the changes made at the worksite, a follow-up evaluation was completed to determine if the identified needs were addressed and to measure the impact of these changes.

Results

The Lactation Support Guidelines, which cover the company's ongoing support for providing milk expression breaks, education, storage, comfort, and privacy, are now incorporated into the agency's orientation materials for new employees. This set of guidelines also covers expectations of staff when it comes to taking breaks, storing milk, and utilizing the shared lactation space. In addition to these policy changes, employees and visitors of the center now have access to a private space designated specifically for lactation.

Results from the follow-up survey showed that the improvements are almost completely supported (94.5%) by visitors and employees. Within just a few weeks after the lactation support changes became available, one-third of visitors expressed they had already utilized the lactation support services. One visitor specifically mentioned, "I am able to use this space when dropping off and picking up my baby, and I couldn't be happier." Other visitors and employees were excited to learn about the available resources within the community that they were unaware existed prior to the initiative.

What's Next

This initiative had a greater impact on the community than anticipated. It has allowed Angie's Angels to educate mothers and fathers about the benefits of breastfeeding exclusively for the first six months after birth. Angie's Angels has provided the community with an example of how other companies can offer lactation support to their

employees, regardless of the limited number of resources or space available. The CHC program at SCPH will continue encouraging other worksites to develop similar programs, by offering lactation support resources and addressing any technical assistance needs.

"Breastfeeding is a wonderful gift to give your baby the nutrients they need. We are so appreciative and proud to be able to give our breastfeeding mothers a private space to spend time with their child."

— Angie's Angels Child Development Center Employee

Find Out More

You can support breastfeeding in the workplace by:

- Allowing flexible scheduling to support milk expression during work.
- Providing a designated private space for women to breastfeed or express milk.
- Giving mothers options for returning to work, such as teleworking, part-time work, or extended maternity leave.
- Encouraging communication between supervisors and employees so that appropriate accommodations can be made to satisfy the needs of both the employee and the company.



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