

Lactation Programs: Employees, Businesses Benefit

(NAPSA)—More than 70 percent of women with children under age 3 are employed full-time. That means that millions of women face the significant challenge of creating the right balance between family needs and work responsibilities.

To help mothers achieve this balance, particularly as it relates to providing their infants with optimal nutrition, a new program is helping companies provide more effective support for mothers who wish to continue to breastfeed after returning to work.

Business Backs Breastfeeding: A Flexible Workplace Program for Breastfeeding Mothers identifies three essential elements needed to implement a successful workplace lactation program:

1. Support. Employers must first create a “mother-friendly” workplace policy and supportive environment in which mothers feel comfortable continuing to breastfeed.

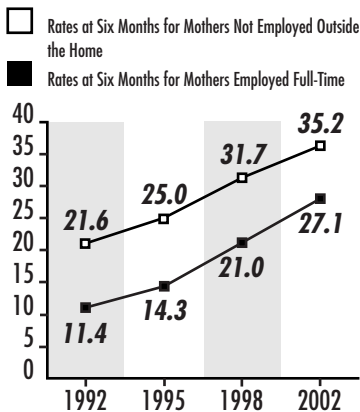
2. Space. If a woman chooses to continue to breastfeed her baby after she returns to work, she will need a private, secure room or office (lactation room) to express milk using a breast pump.

3. Time. Mothers need to be given appropriate time to allow them to express milk.

“We know that returning to work is a primary barrier to extending breastfeeding. Clearly, more can be done to support breastfeeding moms in the workplace,” said Susan May, M.D., FAAP, director of medical communications at Abbott Laboratories’ Ross Products Division and clinical associate professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University.

Women who work full-time start breastfeeding at virtually the same rate as all mothers. But by the time their infants are 6

Breastfeeding Rates at Six Months in the U.S.*



*These are recorded breastfeeding rates at six months for U.S. women. Mothers Survey, Ross Products Division, Abbott Laboratories, Columbus, OH, 2002.



months old, breastfeeding rates for full-time working moms drop about 25 percent below those of mothers who do not work outside the home.

“Workplace programs for breastfeeding moms help attract and retain employees, and at the same time provide real health benefits for women and infants,” said Carol Evans, president and CEO of Working Mother Media.

Business Backs Breastfeeding, launched by Ross Products in partnership with Working Mother Media, provides instructions, tips and template materials to help employers support extended breastfeeding. The program was developed in consultation with lactation specialists and reviewed by medical and nutrition experts. To view the program, visit www.Ross.com. Go to the About Ross section, click on the News and Media Center, and then click on Press kits.