Supporting School Employees who Breastfeed

Support from a mother’s employer, along with time & space to pump at work, is essential in addressing the issue of breastfeeding duration, especially in challenging workplace settings.

### Breastfeeding Workplace Laws

2010 Amendment to Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938:

> “An employer shall provide, 1) a reasonable break time for an employee to express breast milk for her nursing child for 1 year after the child’s birth each time such employee has need to express the milk; and 2) a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.”

### Schools as Workplaces

One caveat of the law, is that it does not necessarily extend to non-traditional workplaces, such as schools.

Most teachers are not covered under the federal law.

Other states have worked with school districts to get them to a breastfeeding supportive status. However, **Louisiana is the first and only state to pass legislation specifically requiring public school boards to adopt a policy** to require each school to provide an appropriate space and reasonable amount of break time to accommodate employees who need to express breast milk (NCSL, 2014).

### Methods

#### Spring 2013

- Louisiana Breastfeeding Law Passed

#### Fall 2013

- Louisiana Breastfeeding Survey conducted in New Orleans area

#### Spring 2014

- Letters mailed to all school districts

#### Summer/Fall 2014

- Follow-up, policies, and workplace designations

### Letters Mailed to All School Districts

- Stated the law and need to create a policy
- Noted that the Louisiana Breastfeeding Coalition (LBC)/Mary Amelia Women’s Center (MAC) was available to help with the creation of a policy
- Informed school districts about mini-grants available and the workplace breastfeeding-friendly designation program

### Follow-up With School Districts and Individual Schools

- Some districts contacted LBC/MAC directly after receiving the letter
- LBC practicum student is following up by email and phone with all districts we have not yet heard from
- Breastfeeding-Friendly school boards are listed on the LBC and MAC websites

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Due to the structure of our school system in Orleans Parish, there are some unique challenges to working with schools:

1. The Orleans Parish School Board has been contacted, but only serves a small amount of schools.
2. Short-term plans include reaching out to Charter Management Organizations, but Charter Schools are managed by multiple organizations.
3. Parochial schools do not fall under the law.

Results

- Only 21% of schools were aware of the law, but after hearing the details of the law, 40% of schools responded that they have begun to implement it.
- About 29% of schools reported having space to pump or place to store milk, and about 40% stated there was break time at least every 3 hours.
- When asked for reasons schools would be unable to implement the law, the majority of schools (53.6%) reported there were no reasons why they couldn’t implement it. However, 18% responded that the largest barrier is lack of adequate space.

38 school districts have passed policies
5 schools have applied for mini-grants to help establish lactation rooms
5 schools have been designated as a Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplaces

Action Steps for Moving Forward

- Work with districts to pass policies
- Provide schools with technical assistance and sharing resources
- Designate individual schools as Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplaces (policy not required) and Workplace Breastfeeding Champions (policy required)
- Obtain feedback from teachers to assess effectiveness and identify challenges to implementation of the law and related policies
- Expand efforts and support for breastfeeding in school settings to include students