

Making your municipality more breastfeeding friendly

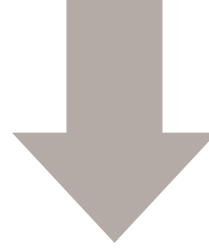
A tool to achieve it.

BREASTFEEDING TODAY

National and international health organizations agree on the importance of breastfeeding to promote the health and development of babies and the health of mothers. Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada recommend exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age and continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age and beyond.

In Québec, more and more mothers wish to nurse their babies. The presence of breastfeeding-friendly living environments has a positive influence on the decision to nurse and facilitates continued breastfeeding. Too many women these days are still being expelled from public places for nursing their children in plain view of others. Yet, breastfeeding a child anywhere anytime is an inalienable right that is enshrined in the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms¹ and that has been confirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada.





MUNICIPALITIES: ENGINES OF CHANGE

Supporting and protecting breastfeeding on your territory would allow your municipality to contribute to the optimal development of young children and to the well-being of women, families and communities. There is no disputing that this is a key component in promoting the health, quality of life and well-being of the population.

The aim here is not to advocate breastfeeding, but simply to make environments hospitable and friendly to nursing mothers and others accompanying them, so as to facilitate the practice of breastfeeding anywhere, anytime.

By posting signs to the effect that breastfeeding is a normal practice, your municipality sends a clear message to its citizens. It contributes to the protection of breastfeeding beyond public places.

Breastfeeding is not a fad. It is a health and societal issue. Join the growing list of outstanding municipalities with a breastfeeding policy. Act now.

22%
indicated municipal
circle and public
spaces as circle where
breastfeeding-friendly
environments had
priority.

Municipal
circle and
public spaces
are among
identified top
environments
that have
priority, mostly
for their political and
physical dimensions,
but also sociocultural
and, to a lesser
extent, economical
dimensions.

*MAQ survey conducted in June 2014

FIVE STEPS TO MAKING A DIFFERENCE

1. Pass a resolution

A resolution is a fast and effective way to assert your municipality's will to support nursing mothers. It should comprise:

- protection for breastfeeding;
- implementation of measures;
- recognition of the right of children to receive the best care possible, which includes being breastfed.

In order to make things easier for your municipal council, the Association pour la santé publique du Québec² (ASPQ) and the Mouvement allaitement du Québec³ (MAQ) have prepared a model resolution and placed it at your disposal.

A policy would allow implementing concrete measures to facilitate the practice of breastfeeding in public places. It could be informed by recognized policy instruments, such as the following:

- International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes⁴
- Ten steps to successful breastfeeding⁵
- Maternity Protection Convention⁶
- Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding⁷

2. Take action on your premises

For feeding to be successful, mother and child must feel safe. For some women, this means being able to breastfeed anywhere, anytime without the risk of being bothered and without being obliged to cover up. Other women require a place that is comfortable and affords privacy. Consequently, signs would need to be posted and facilities set up in buildings, including breastfeeding rooms that women could use at their discretion.

Women should not see their freedom restricted because of breastfeeding and should not be victims of discrimination. This should be the case in all public places, including parks, municipal swimming pools, libraries, museums, and arenas.

We remind you that, in order to protect breastfeeding, Canada ratified the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes⁸. All municipal postings and publications must comply with this code.

3. Inform the population and municipal employees

The right to breastfeed anywhere is a little-known right. Breastfeeding rooms exist to accommodate women who wish to have some privacy. The mother-child dyad must be left in peace during feedings. This is why it is imperative to identify public places – indoor and outdoor – as locations where women can breastfeed without restriction and without the obligation to cover up.

The international breastfeeding symbol⁹ is used to express support for breastfeeding. This royalty-free logo can be posted in all places friendly to nursing mothers.

All employees should be informed of the municipal policy on breastfeeding and of the right of women to breastfeed anywhere, anytime. They must be encouraged to gain awareness of the fact that the matter concerns every one,

be it for the position they hold, the contact they have with the public, or a colleague they work with who is nursing.

World Breastfeeding Week (October 1 to 7) is the ideal occasion to remind the population and employees that your municipality protects and wishes to normalize the practice of breastfeeding in public.

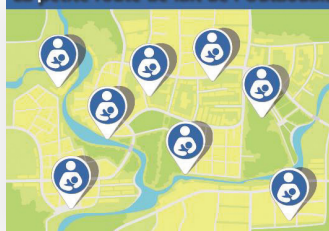
4. Support community initiatives

Numerous community groups work to support nursing mothers and promote the practice of breastfeeding in public. These family-centred volunteer-based organizations need your recognition and support. You can help them in different ways, such as lending space for meetings, publicizing their activities, and supplying resources.

Your municipality would increase its visibility by participating in certain local initiatives aimed at promoting and normalizing the practice of breastfeeding. These include the annual organization of the Breastfeeding Challenge¹⁰ and the creation of a network of locations offering facilities to nursing mothers with no purchase obligation.



La petite route de lait de l'Outaouais 11



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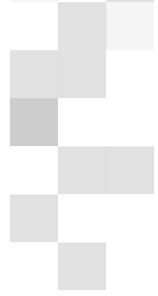


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5. Make a commitment as an employer

More and more women wish to continue breastfeeding beyond their maternity leave. Accommodations in the workplace and in daycare establishments would facilitate this transition. In order to strengthen the coherence of your actions, you can also take certain steps as an employer. To support your nursing employees, you could:

- place a suitable room at their disposal for the purpose of breastfeeding or expressing their milk;
- install a refrigerator or designate a refrigerated space for storing breastmilk and identify it as such;
- allow them to take feeding breaks without being penalized;
- post signs to sensitize other employees to the importance of supporting nursing mothers;
- facilitate the opening of daycare services near municipal offices in order to foster mother-child proximity.



INSPIRATIONAL INITIATIVES

Some municipalities are off to a head start

- The City of Gatineau has embarked upon a process of raising public awareness and setting up welcoming environments in order to facilitate breastfeeding on municipal premises. Its Family Policy adopted in 2013 includes pro-breastfeeding measures¹⁴.
- The City of Toronto publishes a directory of places that welcome breastfeeding in public and encourages businesses, movie theatres, restaurants and shopping malls to become “baby-friendly”¹⁵.
- The City of Longueuil has set up an ISO family-friendly certification to attest that an establishment can properly accommodate families with children 0 to 5 years of age. This certification also comprises requirements regarding features that facilitate the practice of breastfeeding¹⁶.
- The City of Toronto¹⁷, like the province of Nova Scotia¹⁸, offers online a series of information sheets addressed to organizations, businesses and parents regarding breastfeeding-friendly environments.



Environnements
FAVORABLES
à l'ALLAITEMENT

Tools to support pro-breastfeeding initiatives

Numerous tools can be found in the MAQ's virtual library to help you make municipal environments breastfeeding-friendly.

These include the following:

- model resolution for municipal councils
- pamphlet on breastfeeding-friendly environments¹⁹ (French only)
- public awareness poster²⁰ for municipalities (French only) ■

Références

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3. Mouvement allaitement du Québec website : www.allaiterauquebec.org/
4. Unicef. International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes spotted at www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_24805.html
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6. International Labour Organization. International Labour Standards on Maternity protection. Spotted at www.ilo.org/global/standards/subjects-covered-by-international-labour-standards/maternity-protection/lang-en/index.htm
7. World Health Organization. Global strategy for infant and young child feeding spotted at www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/9241562218/en/
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9. Wikimedia Commons. Breastfeeding icon spotted at commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Breastfeeding-icon-med.svg
10. Quintessence Foundation. Breastfeeding Challenge spotted at www.babyfriendly.ca/challenge-home.aspx
11. Route du lait [The Milk Run] by Nourri-Source Montréal spotted at routedulait.org/ (French only)
12. The Tiny Milk Run of the Outaouais region by the Direction de la santé publique de l'Outaouais and its partners: santepublique-outaouais.qc.ca/actualites/tout-petits/allaitement/petite-route-de-lait-de-loutaouais/ (pamphlet available in English)
13. Route de lait de Baie-des-Chaleurs [The Baie-des-Chaleurs Milk Run] by Supportons-Lait spotted at www.supportons-lait.org/route-de-lait/ (French only)
14. Ville de Gatineau. Breastfeeding section (French only) spotted at www.gatineau.ca/portail/default.aspx?p=sante_publique_qualite_vie/familles_aines/allaitement
15. City of Toronto. Directory of Breastfeeding spotted at www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=34dc54fc21cb0410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD
16. Initiative 123 Go spotted at http://www.initiative123go.com/upload/documents/2F4710C3-AE74-F32D-C240-42ACB1ECDA25-D9%C3%A9pliantISOfamille2012_f.pdf (French only)
17. City of Toronto. Breastfeeding spotted at www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vgnextoid=83e64485d1210410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD
18. Nova Scotia. Make Breastfeeding Your Business spotted at novascotia.ca/DHW/healthy-communities/documents/Breastfeeding-support-user-guide.pdf
19. Mouvement Allaitement du Québec. Virtual Library record 1955 spotted at allaiterauquebec.org/bibliothequevirtuelle/items/show/1599 (French only)
20. Mouvement Allaitement du Québec. Virtual Library record 1600 spotted at www.allaiterauquebec.org/bibliothequevirtuelle/items/show/1600 (French only)

MAKING MUNICIPALITIES MORE BREASTFEEDING FRIENDLY

WHEREAS (name of municipality) subscribes to an approach focused on the quality of life and well-being of families, health and sustainable development;

WHEREAS (name of municipality) is actively committed to promoting the health, quality of life and well-being of its citizens;

WHEREAS health professionals, like Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, recommend exclusive breastfeeding until six months of age and continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age and beyond;

WHEREAS offering breastfeeding-friendly living environments contributes to the optimal development of young children and to the well-being of women, families and society;

WHEREAS breastfeeding in public is a right protected under the Québec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and the Supreme Court has already ruled in favour of this practice in public places;

WHEREAS mothers are still asked all too often not to breastfeed in public places;

It is moved by _____, seconded by _____ and unanimously resolved (or resolved by majority vote) that: (Name of municipality) undertakes to:

1. Take a series of measures to facilitate, welcome and protect the act of breastfeeding in municipal public places;
2. Clearly identify municipal public places as environments where women are free to breastfeed without the obligation of covering up;
3. Set up breastfeeding rooms in public buildings for women who need a place that is comfortable and affords privacy;
4. Implement a pro-breastfeeding policy in all its public places and make it known to managers, employees and the population (or add measures to an existing policy);
5. Adopt a policy to support nursing employees and make it known to all managers and employees.

*** Taking it further:**

6. Support the implementation of a network of places offering breastfeeding facilities with no purchase obligation;
7. Encourage restaurant and store operators on its territory to promote breastfeeding in their establishments;
8. Participate in and support the organization of events that promote breastfeeding in public;
9. Promote and support family-centred volunteer-based community organizations.

For further information, contact:

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