

A MODEL RESOLUTION FOR MUNICIPALITIES



Breastfeeding-Friendly Municipalities

Communities that Welcome all Families

THE IMPORTANCE OF BREASTFEEDING

National and international organizations agree that breastfeeding is an important way to foster infant health and development as well as maternal health. For this reason, Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dietitians of Canada, and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada recommend sustained breastfeeding for up to two years or longer with appropriate complementary feeding after six months.¹ **In Quebec, nearly 90% of women initiate breastfeeding when their babies are born**, but a vast majority of them wean their babies before they planned to.²

One of the obstacles to breastfeeding is the difficulty women face meeting their babies' needs in public, and that includes municipal spaces. **Being able to breastfeed at any time and in any space is necessary for a woman's full participation in society.** Moreover, it is a basic human right protected by Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms.³ Supporting and protecting breastfeeding contributes to the health and wellbeing of families and of young children. **Creating family-friendly municipalities and areas helps encourage breastfeeding.**



FIVE STEPS FORWARD

2. Act locally

MUNICIPALITIES: DRIVING CHANGE

By asking people to respect breastfeeding families, your municipality sends a clear message to its citizens: breastfeeding is normal! The message helps protect breastfeeding women and families. This does not mean advertising breastfeeding, but rather showing the value you place on all families when you enable everyone to live in a welcoming and inclusive community.

Breastfeeding is not a passing fad or a lifestyle choice; it is a social issue. “If breastfeeding did not already exist, someone who invented it today would deserve a dual Nobel Prize in medicine and economics.”⁴

Join the growing number of municipalities that have demonstrated their excellence through their breastfeeding policy.

90 %

of Quebec residents feel it is important for governments to invest more in the wellbeing and development of young children.

survey conducted by Léger in, 2020⁵

1. Adopt a resolution and a policy

In addition to a family policy, a resolution affirms the will of your municipality to support women and people who breastfeed. (See the model resolution in the Appendix.)

Adopting a policy or adding provisions to the family policy makes it possible to implement concrete measures to facilitate breastfeeding, ensure that people who breastfeed are well supported, and protect breastfeeding. Policy documents adopted by national and international organizations can be used as a basis for municipal policy. Here are some examples:

- *Politique gouvernementale de prévention en santé*⁶
- *Global strategy for infant and young child feeding*⁷
- *Maternity Protection Convention*⁸
- *The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes Code (the Code)*⁹

As a basic rule, women should not face any restrictions on their freedom and should not face discrimination because they breastfeed. All public spaces must be breastfeeding friendly: parks, public pools, libraries, museums, arenas, etc. For breastfeeding to work well, mothers and children need to feel safe and comfortable. For some women, this means breastfeeding wherever and wherever they are, without any risk of being bothered or asked to cover up. **Actions should include adapting the environment to provide comfortable seating for breastfeeding mothers and babies, and posting information to educate the public about the importance of breastfeeding.** Setting up a breastfeeding room or area is a complementary action for mother-child dyads who need a calm and secluded space, and such areas should be accessible in all buildings.

Breastfeeding can be lifesaving in an emergency situation. In planning for emergencies, municipalities should remember that first responders and field workers have a role to play in supporting and protecting breastfeeding.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING FAMILIES



The right to breastfeed anytime and anywhere is protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

DID YOU KNOW?
Health Canada and the Canadian Paediatric Society recommend continued breastfeeding for up to two years and beyond, with appropriate complementary foods from six months.

 Your breastfeeding friendly resource
mouvementallaitement.org

3. Educate municipal staff and the population

All staff members need to work together to make a breastfeeding policy work: as they carry out their regular duties or when they interact with the public or with co-workers who breastfeed. Municipal employees need to understand the policy, follow it, and participate in its implementation.

The right to breastfeed everywhere is often misunderstood. As well as posters and signage in facilities, it is important to make the public aware of this right, for instance when sharing municipal initiatives in the area of breastfeeding-friendly environments.

Every year, **World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is celebrated in Quebec and Canada from October 1 to 7.** It's the ideal opportunity to remind everyone, both municipal staff and the public, that your municipality is committed to encouraging breastfeeding in all facilities and public spaces.

Did you know that normalizing the use of bottles and pacifiers jeopardizes breastfeeding? In visual materials, images of a baby in a mother's arms, without a bottle or a pacifier, are inspiring and inclusive of all families. A symbol or an emoji of a teddy bear or a rattle can be used on baby products. The international breastfeeding symbol is now recognized by most parents and is copyright-free.¹⁰

PROTECTING BREASTFEEDING: EVERYONE HAS A ROLE TO PLAY¹¹

Learn about inspiring initiatives in this series of information sheets:

- Emergency Services
- Websites and Blogs
- Visual Arts
- Family Educators and Speakers
- Community Organizations
- Food Banks



4. Support community breastfeeding resources

Many community organizations offer a wide range of services to support breastfeeding women and parents and their families. You can support the volunteers and groups that are rooted in your community in many ways. For example, you can offer free meeting rooms, advertise their activities, or providing financial or in-kind contributions. One way of showing your support is by participating in local initiatives such as Breastfeeding Challenges¹² or other activities during WBW.

Are your municipal facilities listed on the Route du lait?¹³ This community initiative is a network of establishments where breastfeeding is welcome. By joining the network, you ensure that all families with young children can enjoy municipal services and facilities.

5. Your role as an employer

More and more women want to continue breastfeeding after their maternity or parental leave. As an employer, you can follow through on your principles by introducing breastfeeding-friendly working conditions and including provisions in contracts to enable municipal staff members to continue breastfeeding. Everyone will benefit, through lower absenteeism, greater workplace satisfaction, increased productivity, and reduced employee turnover.¹⁴

Suggestions for supporting breastfeeding employees:

- Access to a suitable room to nurse or pump
- A refrigerator to store pumped milk
- Posters to raise the awareness of staff members about the importance of supporting their breastfeeding co-workers
- A childcare centre close to or in the facility
- Options for remote or hybrid work
- Breastfeeding breaks, preferably as part of paid hours, to express milk or to breastfeed

INSPIRING INITIATIVES

Municipalities that have led the way

The cities of Terrebonne and Mascouche began installing breastfeeding benches in parks in 2022. These benches have modified seating, comfortable armrests, and a change table.

The City of Beaconsfield made a resolution in 2019 to commit to a series of measures to foster, welcome, and a commitment to a series of actions to foster, welcome, and protect breastfeeding in municipal spaces.¹⁵

All districts of the City of Saguenay have registered their buildings on the Route du lait. These actions followed a resolution adopted in 2018.¹⁶

The City of Bouctouche, New Brunswick, adopted a breastfeeding policy in 2015. It includes support for breastfeeding municipal employees.¹⁷



Your
breastfeeding friendly
resource

MouvementAllaitement.org



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11. Mouvement allaitement du Québec. (2023). *Protecting Breastfeeding: Everyone Has a Role to Play*. <https://mouvementallaitement.org/project/feuilletts-code/>
12. Mouvement allaitement du Québec. Semaine mondiale de l'allaitement maternel (SMAM) (in French only). <https://mouvementallaitement.org/semaine-mondiale-allaitement-maternel-smam/>
13. Mouvement allaitement du Québec. Route du lait (in French only). <https://mouvementallaitement.org/routes-du-lait/>
14. Ontario Public Health Association. (2008). *Creating a Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace*. <https://mouvementallaitement.org/bibliothequevirtuelle/items/show/1658>
15. Ville de Beaconsfield. (2019). *Minutes of the Council of Beaconsfield, Septembre 23, 2019*. <https://www.beaconsfield.ca/en/our-city/council-meetings-and-documents/council-meeting-minutes-and-agendas-2019/september-23-2019/3983-regular-meeting-of-september-23-2019-at-8-p-m-minutes/file>
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MODEL RESOLUTION

Breastfeeding-Friendly Municipalities

WHEREAS (name of municipality or district) subscribes to an approach oriented towards the quality of life and the wellbeing of families, towards health and sustainable development;

WHEREAS (name of municipality or district) is committed to actions to promote the health, quality of life, and the wellbeing of its citizens;

WHEREAS Health Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society, Dieticians of Canada, and the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada recommend sustained breastfeeding for up to two years or longer with appropriate complementary feeding after six months;

WHEREAS providing a breastfeeding-friendly living environment contributes to the optimal development of young children and to the wellbeing of women, families, and society;

WHEREAS breastfeeding in public spaces is a right protected by *Quebec's Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* and the Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (the human rights and children's rights commission of Quebec) has ruled in favour of breastfeeding in public spaces;

WHEREAS women who are breastfeeding in public are still asked too often to cover up or to leave the premises, which impedes their full participation in society and may have a significant negative impact on their motivation to continue breastfeeding; now, therefore,

It is moved by _____, seconded by _____
and RESOLVED unanimously / by a majority vote that (name of municipality or district) is committed to the following actions:

- 1 – Introducing a series of measures to facilitate breastfeeding and protecting women and families who are breastfeeding in municipal buildings and settings;
- 2 – Posting clear signage and notices in municipal spaces affirming that women and families can breastfeed anywhere, freely, and without being obligated to cover themselves;
- 3 – Providing a room in public buildings for people who wish to breastfeed or pump in a private setting;
- 4 – Implementing a policy to facilitate breastfeeding in municipal buildings and settings and informing municipal managers and staff and the general public of the policy, or adding breastfeeding provisions to an existing policy;
- 5 – Enhancing policies on working conditions to support breastfeeding employees through concrete measures, and familiarizing staff with these measures;
- 6 – Supporting community breastfeeding volunteers and organizations, recognizing their contribution to the community, and promoting their services;

To increase the impact of the resolution, you may wish to add:

- 7 – Supporting the Route du lait network and provide breastfeeding facilities to everyone, with no purchase or use of services required, registering municipal facilities on the list, and encouraging restaurant and retail owners to register their businesses;
- 8 – Supporting the organization of events that normalize breastfeeding in public places and taking part in them.

For more information, contact:

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