

# Breastfeeding-Friendly



In Quebec, more than 16% of children are still breastfeeding at one year of age.<sup>1</sup> This means that an average of one or two toddlers in each group of ten children are breastfed.

**Did you know that there are simple and effective ways a child care centre can help families continue breastfeeding?**



Child care services can help protect breastfeeding. This is not about promoting or supporting breastfeeding, but rather introducing practices to foster continued breastfeeding, such as the ideas suggested in the Framework Gazelle and Pumpkin published by Quebec's Ministère de la Famille.<sup>2</sup> All families and staff will benefit from these practices.



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# Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Services: Everyone Wins!

## Lower risk of illness

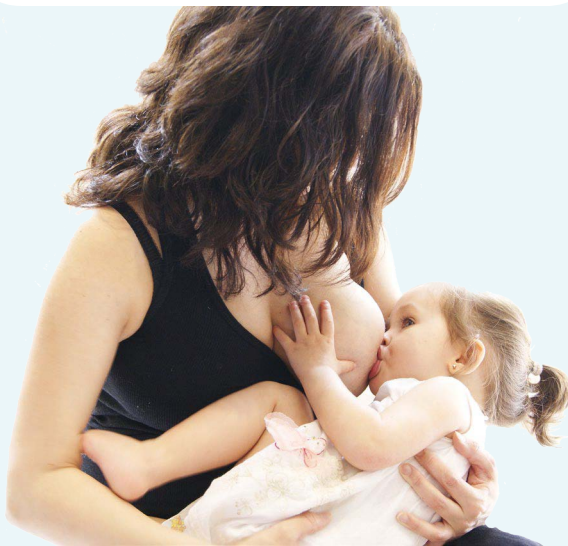
Continued breastfeeding contributes to a reduction in the child's risk of transmitting certain illnesses in the child care facility (gastroenteritis, respiratory infections, and others). Human milk contains thousands of active substances that strengthen a child's immune system, preventing certain illnesses or reducing their symptoms or duration. The protective effect is the result of immune cells and antibodies produced by the mother and adapted to the environment.

## Better co-operation with parents

Respecting parents' decisions about how to feed their children creates a more co-operative relationship with parents, who feel respected and supported. This makes the staff's work more satisfying.

## Breastfeeding makes integration easier

By helping to strengthen a child's sense of emotional security, breastfeeding reduces the intensity of separation anxiety and fosters independence, making it easier for children to be integrated into a new setting..



Health Canada and other organizations recommend sustained breastfeeding for up to two years or longer, with appropriate complementary feeding after six months.<sup>3</sup>

## Are you familiar with breastfeeding resources in your community?

Breastfeeding volunteers work with community organizations, offering support to families throughout their breastfeeding journey. The services of volunteers are available to families at all times. Volunteers can answer questions about helping children adjust to child care, pumping and expression, weaning, etc. Staff can also get answers to their questions about breastfeeding and breastfeeding-friendly practices, including demystifying toddler breastfeeding and setting up a nursing space. Don't hesitate to contact them!

**To find resources in your region:** [mouvementallaitement.org/rca](http://mouvementallaitement.org/rca)

# Inspiring Ideas

“We posted the *MAQ Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Service Charter* to remind us that women are counting on our support to continue breastfeeding.”

“The connections we’ve made with breastfeeding organizations in the community were invaluable when we decided to introduce more breastfeeding-friendly practices.”

*Several of our staff were hesitant about breastfeeding and had biases about integrating breastfed babies. They were convinced that it was harder. The info sheet about integration helped us all to better understand breastfeeding and how it was connected to reducing the intensity of separation anxiety. The staff is now much more open and comfortable.*

Karl

Director of an early childhood education centre

“We give out the flyer *Breastfeed when your child is in child care?* You can do it! to parents of breastfed children when they register. The flyer tells them about breastfeeding resources in the community that can help them.”

“The *Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Service sticker* is displayed at the entrance of our daycare. It seems to remind parents to share their breastfeeding plans with us.”

*To help raise our staff’s awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding, we contacted a community organization that had expertise. Volunteers came to our facility to give a short workshop that demystified many aspects of breastfeeding toddlers and helped us understand the reasons families decide to continue breastfeeding.*

Murielle

Director of a private child care centre

“The info sheets on breastfeeding topics that we gave to all our early childhood educators and staff are a reliable source of information and dismantle myths and misconceptions.”

“The *Handling Human Milk* poster is really useful for new people who join our staff and work in the infant room.”

*When I am registering a child, I ask the parents if the child is breastfeeding and if they plan to continue. Then I explain how my daycare centre can support them. Parents are usually very pleased to find out about our efforts to help families continue breastfeeding. The little things we do to help can make a big difference for them.*

Johanna

Owner of a home daycare

# Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Service Kit

Produced by *Mouvement allaitement du Québec* (MAQ), the Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Service Kit is designed to help breastfeeding families who wish to continue breastfeeding after their children start child care. The Kit is a set of complementary, practical tools that includes the following materials:

- ★ Information for child care facilities and staff
  - Booklet for owners and directors of child care services to raise awareness of the importance of continued breastfeeding
  - Poster: *MAQ's Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Service Charter* to describe practices that foster continued breastfeeding of children in child care
  - Sticker: *Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Service* to designate child care services that respect the Charter and to encourage dialogue with families about breastfeeding
  - Information sheets designed to introduce early childhood educators and child care staff to topics related to breastfeeding and to dismantle myths and misconceptions
  - Poster: *Handling Human Milk* to remind child care workers that handling human milk is just as simple as handling other types of milk
  - Statement of Commitment to be completed and sent to MAQ to receive the sticker and posters
- ★ Flyer for parents: *Breastfeed when your child is in child care? You can do it!*
- ★ *Guide for Breastfeeding Services in the Community to support the work of volunteers with breastfeeding parents and child care staff*

You can find all the materials included in the Kit on our website at:  
[mouvementallaitement.org/services-de-garde](http://mouvementallaitement.org/services-de-garde)

Protecting breastfeeding is a collective effort to which child care services have the capacity to contribute.

## References

1. Observatoire des tout-petits. (2019). Durée de l'allaitement total. <https://tout-petits.org/donnees/environnement-familial/comportements-a-risque-et-comportements-preventifs/allaitement/duree-de-l-allaitement-total/>
2. Ministère de la Famille. (2021). *Gazelle and Pumpkin: Framework for creating environments that support healthy eating, active play and motor development in educational childcare services*. <https://www.mfa.gouv.qc.ca/fr/publication/Documents/guide-gazelle-pumpkin.pdf>
3. Joint statement of Health Canada et al. (2012). Nutrition for Healthy Term Infants: Recommendations from Birth to Six Months. <https://mouvementallaitement.org/bibliothequevirtuelle/items/show/1745>

## About Mouvement allaitement du Québec

*Mouvement allaitement du Québec* (MAQ) is a community organization created in 2009 to contribute to creating breastfeeding-environment environments, in order to foster the optimal development of young children and the wellbeing of women, families, and society. Breastfeeding-friendly environments owe it to themselves to respect all women and all families.



Your breastfeeding  
friendly resource