Supporting Breastfeeding Teachers

The 2022 Providing Urgent Maternal Protections for Nursing Mothers (PUMP) Act requires public schools to provide lactating teachers with reasonable breaks and private, non-bathroom spaces to pump during the workday for the first year of their baby’s life. Actual implementation has been trickier.

Many teachers report that these accommodations remain out of reach. For instance, a recent unscientific Education Week poll on social media asked, “Are breastfeeding teachers at your school given time and resources to pump during the school day?” Among 790 respondents, 40 percent answered “no.” Keep reading to learn why it’s critical for schools to adhere to the PUMP Act and how to make it work.

WHY THE PUMP ACT MATTERS

**It's good for retention and student learning**

More than three-quarters of public school teachers are women, and many are of childbearing age, according to federal data. When new mothers have adequate space and breaks to pump at work, they are more likely to stay in the workforce, which benefits employers’ retention rates, the employee’s financial security, and continuity in the classroom needed to help students thrive.

**It promotes health among childbearing employees and their infants**

**Health effects of breastfeeding for moms:**

- Type 2 diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Breast cancer

**Health effects of breastfeeding for babies:**

- An essential combination of nutrients for infants
- Antibodies that protect infants from illnesses, including ear infections, diarrhea, respiratory illnesses, and allergies

**SOURCE:** American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

**OTHER ESSENTIAL TIPS | Where and How**

- Carve out a private, clean, and secure space for lactating women.
- Provide adequate seating in the pumping area.
- Use a hanging door tag to alert students and staff that pumping is in progress. **Consider downloading this one from Education Week.**
- Provide a dedicated refrigerator for storing expressed breast milk.
- Offer supply labels for employees to place on containers used for storage.

**TIPS | From Principals**

**How schools can support breastfeeding teachers:**

**Build pumping breaks into the master schedule:**

“As the principal, I take a proactive role in managing the schedule to accommodate these needs... I will usually plan a week out so there is advance knowledge, which makes it easier to accommodate changing schedules.”

—Michael Martin, principal at Buckeye Central High School in New Washington, Ohio

**Lean on teamwork:**

Staff with offices—administrators, social workers, school counselors, and secretaries—volunteer their offices for a comfortable and private space for the women to use.

—Kristy Zaleta, principal at Rogers Park Middle School in Danbury, Conn.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- U.S. Department of Labor’s FLSA Protections to Pump at Work: [https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pump-at-work](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pump-at-work)
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
Please DO NOT DISTURB
PUMPING in Progress

EDWEEK DOOR HANGER inspired by a similar creation of the U.S. Department of Labor