



Opal

Picture Perfect

Guide for businesses and public spaces on how to create supportive environments for breastfeeding



OPAL is a joint program of
State and Local Governments.



Why this document is needed

The purpose of this document is to help businesses and planners know exactly what breastfeeding mums find helpful and supportive in community spaces.

Research shows that breastfeeding should be encouraged and supported as it has many benefits for the wellbeing of babies and their mothers. Whilst initiation rates of breastfeeding are high (96%), for many reasons the breastfeeding rates decrease rapidly to 15% by 5 months.¹

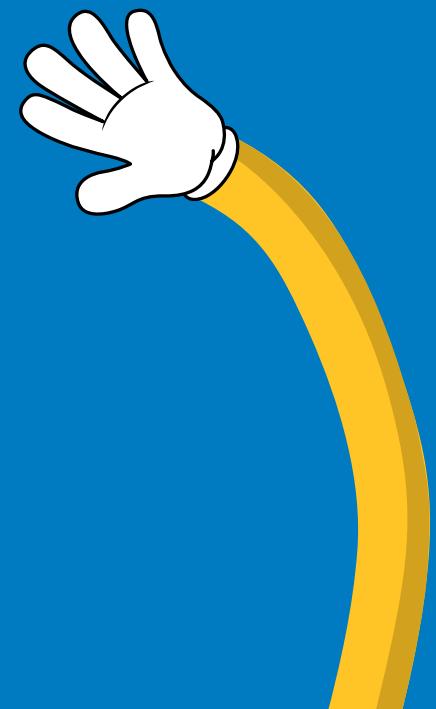
We all understand the importance of breastfeeding and creating breastfeeding supportive environments is an important piece of the puzzle. A key principle from the Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy 2010-2015² is recognising the ecological context of breastfeeding which is influenced by family, social, cultural and environmental factors.

But what exactly does ‘breastfeeding supportive environment’ look like, and how can planners and business owners ensure that the spaces they are making are indeed breastfeeding friendly?

Through this document, creators of public spaces can be shown what it means to welcome and support breastfeeding, based on feedback from mums.

Noted is that the opinions of local mums was consistent with the requirements of the Australian Breastfeeding Association Baby Care Rooms Awards. In addition, this document looks at other public spaces such as cafes and open spaces where mums feed, and the amenities preferred by mums in these sites.

This project was inspired and informed by community consultations by Campbelltown City Council and the City of Charles Sturt in 2013 and 2015 where around 125 mothers were spoken to.



¹ AIHW 2011. 2010 Australian national infant feeding survey: indicator results. Cat. no. PHE 156. Canberra: AIHW. Viewed 27 March 2015 <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=10737420927>.

² Australian Health Ministers' Conference 2009, The Australian National Breastfeeding Strategy 2010-2015. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Canberra.



Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the mothers and their children for volunteering in this project

Naomi, Molly and Sinead

Bec and Claire

Carly, Asher and Rylan

Kristy and Parker

Jasmine and Eleanor

Ali and Sophie

Klaire and Lucas

We would like to thank the following businesses and spaces for agreeing to be featured

Ikea Adelaide

Westfield West Lakes

Five Little Figs Cafe

Il Nido Children's Centre

Campbelltown Library

Thorndon Park

Sites were chosen to illustrate the facilities mums identified, and represent a variety of settings from large scale retail to community and public spaces.

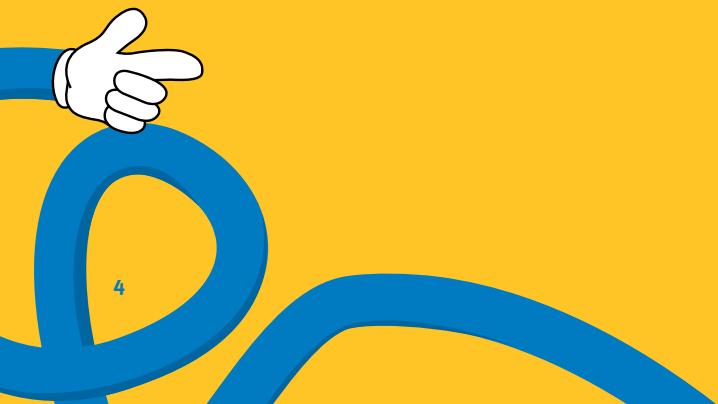
This document was compiled by Kristy Schirmer, Zockmelon Consulting for OPAL Campbelltown and Charles Sturt.

Top priorities for breastfeeding mums

Based on a community survey, we found that the top priorities for mums were:

- › Cleanliness
- › Comfortable seating
- › Quiet space
- › Space to move a pram

Change tables, and areas for older children to be present or safe was also important.



Shops & Parenting rooms

A photograph of a woman with red hair tied back, wearing a black top and red pants, sitting on a dark leather sofa. She is smiling and laughing with two young children. One child is on her lap, and the other is sitting next to her. They are all laughing. The background shows a modern interior with large windows, a yellow umbrella-like structure, and a sign for a restroom. A colorful graphic of overlapping circles (pink, yellow, blue, purple) is in the top right corner.

**“If there was a place that was
good and supportive you will go
back there and tell other mums”**

“It’s important to have a private space if expressing, using nipple shields, taking a long time to feed or even just when you’re still learning.”



Mums said that comfortable seating is essential. Ideally, chairs should have no arms for comfortable feeding of older and longer babies or twins. Being able to easily clean or wipe seats is preferred.

Mums told us it was important that they didn't feel like they were breastfeeding in a toilet. Ideally the feeding areas should be slightly separated from the toilets. Designated rooms for breastfeeding were preferred due to smell, hygiene and taking up the change table/toilet space for long breastfeeding times.



“I don’t expect my baby to eat in the toilet!”





Power points for expressing.

Hot water access is needed for parents who are gavage feeding.





Less decorations and stimulation in the main feeding areas is preferred for distractible babies.



Clean areas including regular changes of nappy bins.





Some mums said they preferred to feed in privacy, whilst others liked the option not to feed behind a curtain or door. The choice of privacy was important.



Mums told us it was helpful to have somewhere for older children to be safe and entertained, such as gated areas and activity stations on the walls.

Room for prams, including double prams, is sought after.



Toilets for toddlers are convenient for parents and children alike.



“If there are better facilities you’d take the time to drive there”

Cafes



Mums said they looked for space to breastfeed at the table without feeling crammed.



'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' stickers are important, not just for breastfeeding women, but to let the other patrons know that breastfeeding is supported.



Community spaces



Community spaces include libraries, waiting rooms or other places frequented by a range of members of the general public.



Best practice in these kinds of areas includes comfortable seating, toys, and opportunities to feed comfortably.



‘Breastfeeding Welcome Here’ signage should be sought in community spaces.





Simple dividers or even furniture can be used to create portable, temporary breastfeeding nooks.



Outdoor spaces



There are things that can be done to help make outdoor spaces more supportive of breastfeeding



Provide park benches with back rests which provide the most comfort for long feeds.





**Change tables are always appreciated, even in places like park toilets.
Think about shade and having seating in shady areas.**



When holding a public event (e.g. market, cultural festival) a place to breastfeed quietly would be welcomed. Remember to let patrons know in advance of efforts to support breastfeeding which could help encourage attendance.

Did you know?

The Australian Breastfeeding Association 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' stickers are free, and you can also register to appear on their list of Breastfeeding Friendly Venues. Mums said that the stickers were important for them, but also so they knew other patrons would accept that breastfeeding was supported there.

You just need:

- › A welcoming attitude from staff and management
- › A smoke free environment
- › Room to move a pram

Go to: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome> for full details.





Even outdoor spaces can be registered as listed
'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' venues.

Room awards

Facilities with baby care rooms can also apply to be accredited to the Australian Breastfeeding Association Baby Care Room project.

Go to <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/babycare> to find out more.

Little things you can do

If you happen to spot a mum feeding a child, bring her a glass of water. It's thirsty work!

If you feature pictures of your patrons on social media, why not feature a mum breastfeeding, or promote that you support and welcome breastfeeding (with permission!)

Show a Breastfeeding Welcome Here sticker, go to: <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome>

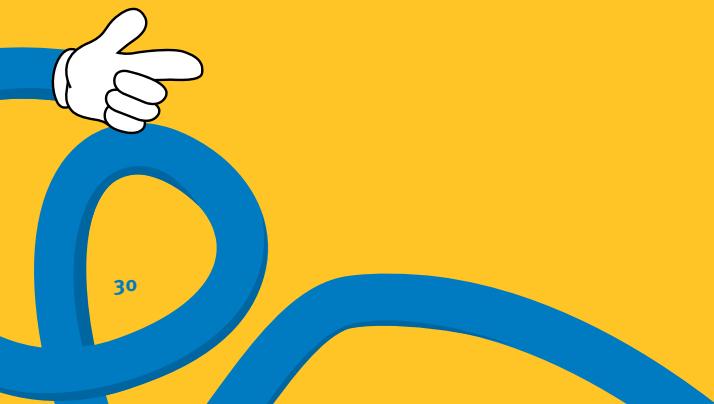
Remember, it's a woman's right to breastfeed anywhere, anytime. The law in Australia protects breastfeeding women from being discriminated against. This includes when expressing milk by hand or with a breast pump to give to your baby later. Babies can be breastfed anywhere and anytime.

If your facility has a designated parents room, find out more about the Australian Breastfeeding Association Baby Care Room project <https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/babycare>

Want to consult with your community, clients or stakeholders?

Sample questions you can ask:

- › What are the kinds of places and spaces that are breastfeeding friendly? What makes those places supportive and breastfeeding friendly?
- › What can we do to make it easier for you to breastfeed here?
- › What can we do to help support breastfeeding mothers in this space?
- › What has made it harder for you to breastfeed when not at home?
- › Overall, would you see this place/space as being child and parent friendly?
Why/why not?
- › If you would suggest one thing we could do to help support mums and babies,
what would it be?

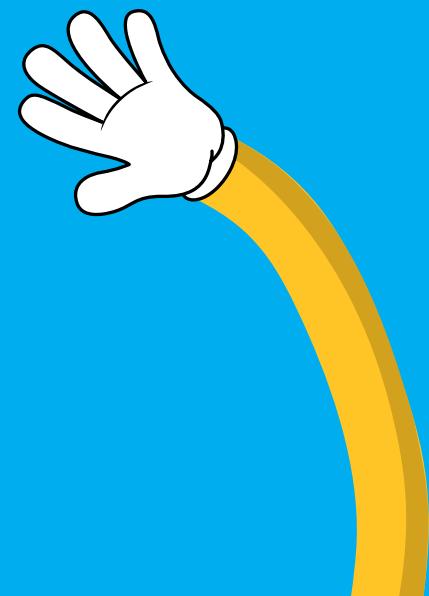


What is OPAL?

OPAL is South Australian program delivered in partnership between state and local government, to support local communities to eat well and be active.

To find out more contact opal@sa.gov.au or visit opal.sa.gov.au.

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