



Breastfeeding Friendly Health Departments (BFHD)

BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH THE 10 STEP PROCESS

Step 8 - Through community partners, encourage local public places to provide a breastfeeding friendly environment for families.

History of the International Breastfeeding Symbol



In the July-August 2006 issue of *Mothering* magazine, Stephanie Ondrack wrote "Taking Down the Almighty Bottle." The article was about the ubiquitousness of baby bottles in print, ads, and even baby books, blankets, and clothing. It highlighted the fact that baby bottle icons are generically used, ironically, to represent "nursing rooms" in public places.

Mothering's Art Director responded to this article, then asked a simple question: is there a universal breastfeeding symbol? Surprisingly, there wasn't. Even though breast milk is the unparalleled ideal food for babies, and the recommended feeding method by many health organizations, the cultural norm in western society for feeding infants is the bottle. Therefore, a baby bottle icon is usually used to represent so-called "nursing rooms" in public spaces. There was no universal symbol in existence that represented the act of breastfeeding.

In response to this realization, *Mothering* magazine held a contest for people to submit their ideas for the world's first international breastfeeding symbol. In November 2006, after combing through over 500 entries, the winner was chosen. Matt Daigle is the graphic artist responsible for the winning design.

Source - <http://www.breastfeedingsymbol.org/>

The International Breastfeeding Symbol

As local health departments work to coordinate breastfeeding support and promotion and establish breastfeeding as normal in the community, a breastfeeding symbol is useful. Fortunately, there is a symbol created for this very reason - the International Breastfeeding Symbol. This symbol has the potential to recognize where breastfeeding is supported. It can be used in many settings to show support for breastfeeding and to help get the word out that breastfeeding is normal.

Using this symbol is recommended; the more the International Breastfeeding Symbol is seen, the more ordinary people will recognize it. In working on both BFHD steps 3 and 8, use of this symbol will be very beneficial.

Resources for the Breastfeeding Symbol

As BFHDs, local public health staff need to let mothers know that breastfeeding is encouraged and welcomed in the public health setting and throughout the community. There are resources available to download the symbol. Some resources are free and other products with the symbol are available for purchase.

- ▶ Free downloadable Breastfeeding Welcome Here signs - <http://kellymom.com/blog-post/breastfeeding-welcome-here/>
- ▶ Breastfeeding symbol store - <http://www.breastfeedingsymbol.org/store/>
- ▶ Breastfeeding Welcome Here stickers and novelty items - <http://www.cafepress.com/+breastfeeding+gifts>



Action Steps

1. Use the breastfeeding symbol and display it in the public health department.
2. Incorporate the symbol into breastfeeding materials.
3. Encourage use and distribute the symbol to community partners such as:
 - Supermarkets
 - Restaurants
 - YMCA
 - Retail businesses
 - Faith organizations
 - Libraries
 - Employers
 - Childcare settings

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Breastfeeding Friendly Health Department
Pilot Project: Tip Sheet #2 - International
Breastfeeding Symbol