

Lactation Room Setup Guide

Importance of a Lactation Room

Women comprise nearly half of the U.S. labor force, and for new parents returning to work, the thought of breastfeeding and pumping can seem like a daunting task (e.g., lugging a breast pump and milk back and forth, finding time to pump). If they decide to pump and continue to offer their child breastmilk, they must also figure out the logistics to make it work. If your company wants to help support and ease the transition back to work for lactating moms, we encourage you to create a private, safe, and clean place for them to express breast milk by building a lactation room or nursing room.

According to the CDC 2022 Breastfeeding Report Card, more than 80 percent of mothers attempt to nurse their newborns. Most breastfeeding moms have a goal to breastfeed for the first six months to one year of their baby's life. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Association of Family Practitioners (AAFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO) recommend that babies receive nothing but breast milk during the first six months of life and continue receiving breast milk for at least the first one to two years and beyond.

Without the support of their employer, this goal can be challenging to achieve. Creating a lactation room will increase the chances of the working mom succeeding at reaching her feeding goals and improve both her health and her child's health.

While some employers view the lactation room as a work-life benefit to the new working mom that can increase loyalty and productivity, it actually helps the employer as well. Research has shown that corporate lactation programs help new mothers avoid taking time off work due to a sick child. The United States Breastfeeding Committee cites a 77% reduction in absenteeism among firms with lactation support and twice as many one-day absences among employees whose babies aren't breastfed.

Legal Requirements & Compliance

The 2010 Affordable Care Act (ACA) amended the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) of 1938 to include the "Break Time for Nursing Mothers Provision," which requires companies with more than 50 employees to provide new mothers adequate spaces in which to pump, described as "other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public." In addition, the 2022 PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act amends and expands the FLSA, including more categories of employees, such as salaried workers. The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) of 2023 also expands support requirements for employers (e.g. lower employer threshold).

In addition to creating a private space for breastfeeding moms to pump milk, employers must also provide reasonable break time. Until the baby's first birthday, nursing moms may take time to get to the lactation room, as well as the time needed for the pumping sessions themselves. Often, that's a 20-minute period every three or four hours during the workday, but it will vary depending on the needs of the mother and child. Please note that individual state and employer policies could extend this support beyond one year.

Allocating Space

When designing a lactation room, it must be private enough to protect from being seen by co-workers or the general public while in use. The room can be as simple or elaborate as desired. The amount of space needed for a lactation room is minimal. Even a 4' x 5' area can provide a private, clean, and comfortable space.

If your facility has limited space, you may want to check out [Mamava](#)- a company that provides freestanding lactation suites.



Lactation Room Recommendations

Below are recommendations and considerations for creating a private, comfortable, and functional lactation space:

Location

- Provide at least one room per each 100 female employees
- Locate the lactation room in a space that is NOT in a restroom; lactation rooms in restrooms do not meet the requirements of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Try to avoid creating a lactation space that can only be accessed through bathrooms, locker rooms, or similar areas
- Maintain comfortable, temperature-controlled conditions
- Include in your regular cleaning schedule
- Consider proximity to work areas to minimize travel time

Privacy

- Ensure the room can be locked or secured
- Identify the room with signage and provide "Privacy Please" indicators
- Consider a sound machine for comfort and discretion
- Use blinds or shades for any windows

Furnishing

- Washable, comfortable chair that allows upright sitting
- Small table or flat surface next to the chair for a breast pump to rest
- Consider a non-carpeted floor that can be easily cleaned
- Do your best to provide a sink, so breast pump equipment can be cleaned. If a sink is not provided in the room, a clean sink should be available nearby
- Easy access to an electrical outlet

- Consider providing a small refrigerator for storing breast milk
- Consider providing lockers or personal storage space

Décor

- Create a relaxing space by using soft colors and gentle lighting (e.g., lamps, wall sconces)
- Add artwork and decorations that encourage mothers to relax
- Place a mirror in the room for moms to adjust their clothing before and after
- Place a clock in the room so the mom can track her pumping session

Support & Supplies

- Shared scheduling system or posted room calendar
- Display breastfeeding policies and helpful resources
- Consider a log or notebook for moms to share their experiences and offer support
- Provide sanitizing wipes, paper towels, and nursing pads
- Consider purchasing a hospital grade, multi-user pump so returning parents do not need to bring their personal use pump to and from work

Partner with Acelleron: Pump@Work Program

Does your company need help creating or enhancing its lactation room(s) to help ease the transition back to work for your breastfeeding moms? Acelleron's Pump@Work Program is a turnkey lactation support solution designed to reduce workplace barriers, improve retention, and strengthen employee wellness outcomes. Program highlights include:

- Lactation Room Setup & Equipment: Consultation, room outfitting, and optional hospital-grade pumps
- 24/7 Lactation Support: Access to certified lactation consultants anytime
- Policy Creation Assistance: Ensure compliance with ACA, PUMP, and PWFA requirements
- Parent Perks: New parent gift boxes and wellness resources

- Education & Community: Workshops, webinars, and ongoing support for employees and HR teams

Let Acelleron help your organization build a workplace culture that truly supports families, because when moms thrive, everyone benefits.

- Email: wellness@acelleron.com
- Learn more: pumpatwork.com

References:

- <https://www.eeoc.gov/time-and-place-pump-work-your-rights>
- <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pump-at-work>