Parenting and Family
Breastfeeding and Working/School Planning Timeline

2–3 months before birth of baby
• The longer you can extend your leave, the better.
• Gain support from employer, fellow employees and family.
• Educate them regarding the benefits of continuing to breastfeed.
• Explore job-sharing options, such as flexible hours, child care (better to do early in pregnancy).
• Look for a place to pump, express and store your breast milk.
• Find a quiet, private area with an electrical outlet near a sink or bathroom.
• Be creative! You may choose to pump in your car.
• If you cannot pump/express breast milk at work, you can wean feedings done while at work and feed formula or stored expressed breast milk, but continue to breastfeed while at home.
• Can baby be brought to you at work to breastfeed?
• Check to see if there is on-site daycare or care close to your work site.

After delivery

Weeks 1–4
• Breastfeed exclusively to develop an adequate milk supply.
• Delay introducing a bottle until 3–4 weeks.
• Purchase/rent the appropriate breast pump.

Weeks 3–4
• Begin practicing pumping and/or hand expression.
• Introduce a bottle feeding system you have chosen.
• Pump at the same time each day.
• Pumping earlier in the day is better.
• After 2 days of added breast stimulation, you will start to see an increase in your supply.
• Offer 1/3 to 1/2 ounce of expressed breast milk every day between normal breastfeedings (snacks).
• Start storing breast milk for future use.

Weeks 4–10
• Spend practice times, getting ready to go to work.
• Develop a plan.
• Visit your baby’s care provider with baby to make the transition less traumatic for them; you may want to begin leaving your baby there for short times.
• If you are going to be able to pump/express your breast milk when at work, 2–3 weeks before returning to work, begin pumping after the feedings that occur during your work hours.
• Continue to offer a snack bottle daily and save the rest of your pumped milk for your “stash.”
• If you are not going to be able to pump/express your breast milk when at work, begin weaning from the breast during working hours.
• After 2–3 days of omitting a breastfeeding session and substituting a bottle – omit a second feeding. Continue until you have omitted all feedings during work hours.
• Visit work with your baby.


The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem.