

12.0 Infant Feeding Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency amongst staff who work within Waltham Forest Children and Families Centres (CFCs) when providing support and education for families around infant feeding and very early years' development.

All staff employed by the CFCs should work to ensure that this policy is implemented within the centres and in their everyday practice.

Outcomes

This policy aims to ensure that the services and care provided improve outcomes for children and their families with a particular emphasis on delivering:

- increases in breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks
- an increase in the number of mothers that formula feed doing so as safely and as responsively as possible
- an increase in the number of babies who start solid foods at around six months of age
- services which promote responsive parent child relationships

Our commitment

Waltham Forest CFCs are committed to providing a high standard of care to families in the area, including:

- Working collaboratively with the HENRY Infant Feeding Team, midwifery and health visiting colleagues and other organisations providing support for parents and young babies.
- Supporting mothers to have a positive breastfeeding experience.
- Working with families to improve and enhance parenting experience.
- Ensuring local needs are met according to best practice for children's centres.

To enable this commitment

- All staff employed by the CFCs are familiarised with this policy on commencement of employment.
- All staff receive training on how to implement the Baby Friendly standards as appropriate to their role.

- The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (The Code) is implemented within the centres.
- All materials produced for families reflect the Baby Friendly standards.
- Parental engagement in both planning and evaluation is encouraged to ensure services meet their needs.
- Internal audit and user satisfaction surveys support continued improvement in services.

The UNICEF Baby Friendly standards

1. Support pregnant women to recognise the importance of breastfeeding and early relationships to the health and well-being of their baby
 - This service recognises the importance of pregnancy as a time to build the foundations of future health and wellbeing and the role children's centres play in supporting this.
 - Pregnant women will be contacted to offer them information and support by the local Health Visiting team who will promote CFC services in their antenatal contact.
 - All classes and information provided at the centres for women in the antenatal period reflect the Baby Friendly standards and comply with the Code.
2. Protect and support breastfeeding in all areas of the service
 - Mothers are welcome to breastfeed in all areas of the CFCs and comfortable facilities are provided.
 - Breastfeeding mothers are informed of all services provided to support continued breastfeeding (Infant Feeding Support provided by the HENRY Waltham Forest team, Health Visiting Child Health Clinics).
 - A clear referral system is in place to ensure that additional help is provided for breastfeeding mothers who require this.
 - Breastfeeding is valued by staff within the centre, and mothers are encouraged and supported to providing any breastmilk.
 - All mothers regardless of feeding method are supported to introduce solid food at around six months of age in accordance with World Health Organization and Department of Health guidelines.
 - No advertising of breastmilk substitutes, bottles, teats or dummies is permitted within the CFCs.
3. Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby
 - Waltham Forest CFCs promote responsive parenting and parents are encouraged to respond to their baby's needs for love, comfort and security.
 - All materials and classes provided for parents reflect this philosophy.

- Parents who have decided to bottle feed are encouraged to do so responsibly and information is provided to support this.

Responsive feeding

The term responsive feeding is used to describe a feeding relationship which is sensitive, reciprocal and about more than simply providing food for a baby. Staff should ensure that mothers attending the CFCs have an opportunity to discuss feeding and behaviour cues.

Mothers should be reassured that breastfeeding can be used to feed, comfort and calm babies and that breastfed babies cannot be overfed or 'spoiled' by frequent feeding. Mothers can also be reassured that breastfeeding can be an opportunity for them to rest.

If a mother is bottle feeding she does need to be careful not to over-feed her baby. However, she can still feed responsively, by recognising feeding cues, holding her baby close and pacing the feed so that her baby is not forced to take more milk than he needs. Young babies feel more secure when they receive most feeds from their parents and this also helps parents and baby build a strong and loving bond.

Policy Name	Infant Feeding Policy
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This policy was developed by	Waltham Forest Children and Family Centre's using UNICEF template.
These people were consulted/involved in developing the policy	Trustees C&FC Partners
This Policy was adopted by	Trustee Board
Date	11/10/17 – reviewed with no changes by Marjorie Aissani 11/11/2019 Reviewed by Marjorie Aissani November 2020 Reviewed with minor amendment – November 2021 Reviewed November 2022 – no changes

Signed	
Name	Bisi Oyekanmi
Role	Chairperson
Next Review Date	January 2025