

ADVANCING INFANT HEALTH: WHY WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT

OVERVIEW



Ontario's breastfeeding initiation rate is just over 89% but drops to 67% for any breastfeeding and 35% for exclusive breastfeeding at 6 months. These rates are below the national rate and also the global breastfeeding target.

THE FACTS

- *Breastfeeding reduces the risk of infection, many illnesses, and health concerns such as SIDS.
- *Breastfeeding reduces health care costs and parental absenteeism.
- *Breastfeeding is a powerful equalizer in early childhood development—especially in marginalized communities.



WE NEED TO TAKE ACTION



- *Incorporate BFI into organizational quality improvement plans and strategic priorities.
- *Embed lactation support into primary care and public health services.
- *Partner with peer support programs, Indigenous and cultural organizations, and local breastfeeding coalitions.
- *Uphold the WHO Code to protect families from formula and bottle marketing pressure.



Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario

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OUTCOME



- *INCREASED 6 MONTH EXCLUSIVITY RATES.
- *REDUCE INFANT ER VISITS AND HOSPITALIZATIONS.
- *IMPROVED EQUITY IN MATERNAL-CHILD HEALTH OUTCOMES.
- *HEALTHCARE DOLLAR SAVINGS.

WE INVITE YOU TO:

- *ENDORSE EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING AS A STRATEGIC HEALTH PRIORITY.
- *SUPPORT CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION TO ADVANCE BFI PRACTICES.
- *INVEST IN TRAINING, PEER SUPPORT, AND DATA COLLECTION.
- *CHAMPION POLICY CHANGE AT LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL LEVELS.



REMEMBER

- *WHO & HEALTH CANADA RECOMMEND EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING TO 6 MONTHS.
- *BFI SUPPORTS EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES THAT IMPROVE BREASTFEEDING RATES.
- *BFI DESIGNATED HOSPITALS AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES HAVE HIGHER BREASTFEEDING RATES.
- *IMPROVED BREASTFEEDING RATES IMPROVE HEALTH OUTCOMES AND SAVE HEALTH CARE DOLLARS.

