

Georgia Department of Human Resources POSITION PAPER ON BREASTFEEDING

If the children of Georgia are to be healthy and strong, it is essential that they receive the best possible nutrition when they are infants. Breast milk is the ideal first food for the human infant. In addition to the nutritional benefits for the infant, this method of feeding offers unique physiological and psychological advantages to both the mother and the infant. Every infant, therefore, should receive the benefits of this ideal choice for infant feeding. This paper presents the recommendations of the State of Georgia for encouraging breastfeeding and defines the advantages of breastfeeding for the health of mothers and infants.

No formula, no matter how "humanized", can take the place of human milk. Decreased infant mortality and optimum infant health are the most important goals of the Division of Public Health. Breastfeeding can contribute significantly to the achievement of these goals because:

- ❖ breast milk provides an ideal balance of nutrients for the human infant;
- ❖ the nutrients in breast milk are easily absorbed and digested;
- ❖ breast milk contains immune factors and anti-infective properties that protect against infections;
- ❖ breastfeeding allows the satiety mechanism in the infant to develop naturally;
- ❖ infants who are breastfed have fewer allergies;
- ❖ breastfeeding permits increased bonding between mother and infant; and,
- ❖ breast milk is safe, sanitary food.

A sound program of information and support is necessary to promote the successful establishment and maintenance of breastfeeding. Such a program should be integrated into the health care system and should encompass both the prenatal and postpartum periods. Based on the World Health Organization/United Nations International Children's Fund (WHO/UNICEF) 1979 meeting on Infant and Young Child Feeding, the [WHO 1981 Resolution](#) and the recommendations of the [American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Nutrition](#), the Georgia Department of Human Resources recommends that:

- ❖ breast milk be the "house formula" in all hospitals in Georgia where maternity services are offered;
- ❖ all expectant parents be informed of the numerous advantages (both to infant and mother) of breastfeeding;
- ❖ every expectant mother receive practical information on how to initiate and maintain lactation;
- ❖ obstetrical procedures and practices be consistent with the policy of promoting breastfeeding;
- ❖ breastfeeding be initiated as soon as possible, preferably during the first hour after birth;

- ❖ every hospital permit and encourage rooming-in and on-demand feeding of breastfed infants;
- ❖ infant formulas not be marketed or distributed in ways that may interfere with the protection and promotion of breastfeeding; and,
- ❖ places of business, including government offices, facilitate the maintenance of lactation through liberalized policies that would promote breastfeeding.

All the available knowledge indicates that breastfeeding is the best choice for infant feeding and should be promoted for mothers and infants of the State. Breast milk as this choice for infant nutrition will promote optimum health for future generations of Georgians.