

Infant feeding policy Loseley Fields Children's Centre

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure consistency amongst staff who work within Loseley Field Children's Centre when providing support and education for families around infant feeding and very early year's development.

All staff employed by Loseley Field Children's Centre 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
- To promote breastfeeding at the level we are at present.

Our commitment

Loseley Field Children's Centre is committed to providing a high standard of care to families in the area, including:

- Working collaboratively with 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 Sure Start / children's centres.

To enable this commitment

- All staff employed by the children's centres Loseley Field 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 Breast milk Substitutes (The Code) is implemented within the centre.
- 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 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 through telephone contact, invitation to Baby Health Clinics run at the centre, one to one contact, and referral to support at Loseley Field.

All classes and information provided 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 Loseley Field Children's Centre and comfortable facilities are provided.

Breastfeeding mothers are informed of all services provided to support continued breastfeeding (Baby Health Clinics, groups, baby café, peer support by outreach worker, breast pump hire).

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 praised for providing any breast milk.

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 breast milk substitutes, bottles, teats or dummies is permitted within the Loseley Field Children's Centre.

3. Support parents to have a close and loving relationship with their baby

Loseley Field Children's Centre promotes 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 responsively and information is provided to support this.

4. 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 Loseley Field Children's Centre have a opportunity to discuss feeding and behaviour cues. Mothers should be reassured that breastfeeding can be used to feed, comfort and calm babies and that breastfeed 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.