

ANYTIME, ANYWHERE



Michigan Breastfeeding Network

MIBFN POSITION PAPER: IN SUPPORT OF BREASTFEEDING ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Overview

Breastfeeding is universally recognized as the optimal feeding method for both women and children. However, individual breastfeeding success is heavily dependent on expansive support systems. Breastfeeding on cue is a basic civil right for mothers and their children. In all 50 states, including the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands, laws exist that specifically allow women to breastfeed anytime, anywhere. Despite current legislative protection, mothers who feed their children in public continue to face scrutiny. The ability to breastfeed anytime, anywhere remains a top concern for many women, highlighting the need for continued societal support amidst ongoing normalization efforts.

Policy Recommendations

We believe Michigan should be a breastfeeding-friendly state, encompassing all communities in which families birth, live, work, learn, and play. At the federal level, Public Law 106-58, Section 647 states: “Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a woman may breastfeed her child at any location in a Federal building or on Federal property, if the woman and her child are otherwise authorized to be present at the location.” All states have laws that specifically permit women to breastfeed in any public or private location. In Michigan in 2014, MIBFN advanced successful passage of the Breastfeeding Anti-Discrimination Act (Act 197 of 2014), which protects a mother’s right to breastfeed in any place that is open to the general public. However, legal protection does not always translate to access and accommodation free from restraints and criticism. To this end, we are working to change the cultural acceptance of breastfeeding while also promoting the right to breastfeed anytime and anywhere.

In support of breastfeeding anytime, anywhere, the Michigan Breastfeeding Network (MIBFN) advocates for the following:

- **Normalization campaigns should center on messages of Breastfeed: Anytime, Anywhere to advance feeding on cue, and reduce concerns about location-specific rights to breastfeed.**
- **Future legislation should include language that also protects public milk expression.**
- **Breastfeeding and milk expression areas should be visible and available everywhere, but marked as clearly optional spaces.**

Vision for the Future

MIBFN envisions a breastfeeding-friendly Michigan that recognizes breastfeeding and human milk as the optimal method of feeding for infants and children; that normalizes the cultural acceptance of breastfeeding; and that supports and encourages breastfeeding anytime and anywhere the need arises.