

1 What does Baby-Friendly Mean?

The Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) is a global standard established in 1991 by the WHO and UNICEF to improve breastfeeding initiation and duration rates. BFI is based on ten best practices which are evidence based, regularly updated, and proven to have a positive impact of breastfeeding success. BFI supports mothers in making informed decisions around infant feeding which is free from commercial influences. BFI supports all families regardless of their feeding decision.



2 Decades of research continues to validate the importance of breastfeeding for optimizing the health of women and children.

Breast milk is the best food for newborn babies. The Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada and the World Health Organization recommend:

- breast milk only for feeding your baby from birth to 6 months
- continuing to breastfeed for up to 2 years or more after introducing solid foods

3 Why Baby-Friendly Matters

- Breastfeeding contributes to a community that is healthier, better educated, more equitable, and more environmentally sustainable.
- Improvements in breastfeeding help prevent non-communicable diseases such as breast and ovarian cancer in women, and obesity and diabetes in children.
- Breastfeeding improves protection for young children against infectious illnesses, such as respiratory infections and otitis media.
- Reducing barriers for working mothers to breastfeed are low-cost interventions that can reduce absenteeism and improve workforce performance, commitment, and retention. (*Rollins et al., Lancet, 2016*)



4 Investing in a Baby-Friendly Nova Scotia

Based on 2018-2019 NSHA data (all sites)

84.6% of mothers intend to breastfeed their babies

80.5% of mothers initiated breastfeeding with their babies

74.7% of babies are breastfed exclusively when discharged home



5 Aim for Hospitals/HealthCare

- ↑ **Safe Care** for infants through evidence-based best practices
- ↑ **Patient satisfaction** with consistent knowledge and support from health professionals
- ↓ **Healthcare dollars** spent on hospitalizations, trips to the doctor and the purchasing of breast milk substitutes
- ↑ **Employee satisfaction** - decreased days of absenteeism as a result of fewer infant illnesses, decreased maternal stress, decreased employee turnover, increased job satisfaction, and increased productivity of breastfeeding employees