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## Position Statement

# Mother- and Baby-Friendly Employment Policies for Midwives

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## Background

In many countries difficulties are experienced in providing optimum care for childbearing women and their babies because of shortages of qualified midwives. Meanwhile midwives too often find it difficult to work in the first year of their own babies' lives because of employment policies and conditions. Breastfeeding is particularly hindered by inflexible attitudes to mother-infant contact in the workplace.

## Position

ICM urges employers of midwives to provide flexible working conditions and policies so that midwives are enabled to return to work after maternity leave as soon as appropriate; without sacrificing the quality of their relationships with their newborns (and other infants), or the right to breastfeed for the period they believe to be appropriate.

## Recommendations

Member Associations are urged to lobby governments to establish legal and employment systems that support and maintain mother- and baby-friendly employment practices by employers.

## Other Relevant Documents

Babyfriendly. Creating a mother-friendly workplace.

<http://www.babyfriendly.org.nz/fileadmin/documents/going-babyfriendly/Creating%20a%20mother%20friendly%20workplace%20A33.pdf>

Best Start. How to be a Family-Friendly Workplace. Health nexus, Ontario. (Available to download from [www.beststart.org](http://www.beststart.org))

Maine General Medical Center. Mother-Friendly Worksite Toolkit. Waterville Maine. (Full toolkit available to order [www.maine-general.org](http://www.maine-general.org))

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UNICEF. 2009 Promoting, protecting and supporting breastfeeding – An introduction to the Baby Friendly Initiative.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The business case for breastfeeding: steps for creating a breastfeeding friendly worksite. (Series of resources to order from, [www.hrsa.gov](http://www.hrsa.gov))

***Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008***

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