

Action Ideas for World Breastfeeding Week 2008 Mother Support: Going for the Gold

Each year, over 120 countries celebrate World Breastfeeding Week. The United States celebrates from August 1 to August 7.



This year's theme focuses on *Mother Support: Going for the Gold* and how gold represents the best effort an individual or entity makes in supporting breastfeeding women. The word "gold" raises awareness of the superiority and normalcy of breastfeeding.

The official Olympics symbol of five interlocking colored rings are ideal for describing five circles of support for breastfeeding. These circles illustrate the potential influences on a mother's decision to breastfeed and to have a positive breastfeeding experience. The circles of support are family and social network, healthcare, workplace and employment, government/legislation, and response to crisis or emergency, all surrounding women in the center circle.

The following are World Breastfeeding Week activity ideas that may be helpful as you develop plans to celebrate this special week.

WIC Clinics

Organize a meeting with community partners to develop support of breastfeeding mothers and infants.

Choose one day during World Breastfeeding Week to honor your community partners for all the work they do in breastfeeding promotion and support.

Hold an exhibit of breastfeeding art in a local bookstore or other venue.

Give dads a certificate to recognize their support of breastfeeding mothers and infants.

Ask WIC staff to model mothering behavior by wearing dolls in slings.

Invite a photographer to take pictures of breastfeeding mothers and babies. Give copies to the mothers and put the pictures on display in WIC clinics.

Give WIC moms a certificate of congratulations for breastfeeding. Frame or laminate the certificates.

Set up a table display or bulletin board in your clinic featuring employees and clients who have breastfed. Attach quotes from these mothers.

Develop a proclamation for your governor or local mayor to sign.

Give gold ribbons to any woman who ever breastfed or pregnant women planning to breastfeed.

Invite local, state and/or national legislators to visit your WIC agency to celebrate World Breastfeeding Week. Share information with them or their field staff regarding the WIC Program and breastfeeding support activities.

Send World Breastfeeding Week postcards with encouraging messages to prenatal and breastfeeding clients.

Health Care Providers

Offer to provide breastfeeding in-services to local physicians and their staff on the importance of breastfeeding.

Promote the 2005 AAP Statement on Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk, which can be found at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/115/2/496>

Send thank-you notes to health care providers that are supportive of breastfeeding.

Prepare plates of homemade and packaged cookies where the homemade cookies represent the breastfeeding initiation rate in the State. Take the plates to health care provider offices to recognize their breastfeeding promotion efforts.

Provide the AAP's "Ten Steps to Supports Parents' Choice to Breastfeed their Baby" to local health care providers.

<http://www.aap.org/breastfeeding/tenSteps.pdf>

Promote the AAP's breastfeeding resources <http://www.aap.org/breastfeeding/new%20resources.cfm>

Community

Collaborate with local Maternal and Child Health agencies to encourage support groups for breastfeeding mothers.

Set up a "rock and relax" booth at the state fair with three areas: a changing area with diapers and wipes, an area for breastfeeding education materials and someone to answer questions, and another area with rocking chairs for mothers to breastfeed their babies.

Host a baby shower, mother/grandmother tea, or other family event to recognize the importance of support for the breastfeeding dyad. Have a speaker, handouts, door prizes, and light refreshments.

Collaborate with a local La Leche League group or other organization on an event or activity during World Breastfeeding Week.

Recognize businesses that accommodate breastfeeding employees or patrons. Give a certificate or send a thank-you note.

Collaborate with local libraries to develop displays or events around the theme. Suggest a children's story hour featuring a book with positive breastfeeding messages. Provide bookmarks or breastfeeding books for mothers or children.

Ask local grocery stores to put a World Breastfeeding Week message on grocery bags. The bag design could include information about breastfeeding and a list of local names and phone numbers of support services.

Wear breastfeeding promotion shirts and buttons to support World Breastfeeding Week.

Media

Write and send an article to local daily and weekly newspapers about breastfeeding featuring this year's theme and include breastfeeding facts and local resources.

Volunteer to appear on a local television or radio station to be interviewed about World Breastfeeding Week.

Resources

The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action website has materials on the 2008 theme. The address is <http://worldbreastfeedingweek.org/downloads.htm>.

A kit to help plan for World Breastfeeding Week is available from the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA): <http://www.ilca.org/worldbreastfeedingweek.html>

