



World Breastfeeding Week (#WBW2023)

1 - 7 AUGUST 2023

**coordinated by the
World Alliance for
Breastfeeding Action
(WABA)**



The World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) was formed in 1991. WABA is a global network of individuals & organisations dedicated to the protection, promotion & support of breastfeeding worldwide.

WABA coordinates the global World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) campaign that aims to inform, anchor, engage & galvanise action on breastfeeding & related issues.



Since 2016, we have aligned our WBW campaign to United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We call this the WBW-SDGs Campaign.

World Breastfeeding Week 2023 (WBW2023) will focus on making a difference for working parents.



#WBW2023

#WBW2023 focuses on breastfeeding and employment or work. It aims to show the effect of paid leave, workplace support and emerging parenting breastfeeding norms, as parents themselves see them.

Target audiences, including governments, policymakers, health sectors, employers, communities and parents, will all see that they have critical roles in empowering families and sustaining breastfeeding-friendly environments in the post-pandemic work life balance.

Objectives of #WBW2023



INFORM

people about working parents' perspectives on breastfeeding and parenting



ANCHOR

optimal paid leave and workplace support as important tools to enable breastfeeding



ENGAGE

with individuals and organisations to enhance collaboration and support for breastfeeding at work



GALVANISE

action on improving working conditions and relevant support for breastfeeding

Workplace limitations remain the most common reason for women to never breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding earlier than recommended by WHO, or than they want themselves.

Even with adequate maternity and parental leave, lack of support for breastfeeding at the workplace can undermine breastfeeding.



The International Labour Organization (ILO) improved working conditions for women and children:

1919

C 3 - stipulates that a woman shall not work for the first six weeks after childbirth and shall be allowed two half hour breaks a day to feed her child.

1952

C 103 - allowing leave of not less than 12 weeks
R 95 - recommending 14 weeks leave

2000

C 103 - allowing not less than 14 weeks
R 191 - recommending 18 weeks leave and in both, various breaks and facilities

Only
43
countries

ratified the Maternity Protection Convention 183
→ 14-week standard + breaks + facilities

Only
18
countries

meet or exceed the ILO Recommendation 191
→ 18-week standard

Only
115
countries

offer paternity leave

Only
68
countries

Offers parental leave, which allows parents to take care of their children after the expiration of maternity and paternity leave

70
countries

do not provide the right to breastfeeding breaks and most of those countries only allow breaks for six months despite breastfeeding being recommended for two years or beyond



There is a need to improve access to paid maternity leave, and other breastfeeding services for women both inside and outside the workplace.

In addition, fathers need specified paternal leave, and parental leave should be granted, meaning the allocation of a period of leave to be shared between the two parents or partners.

The purpose is to ensure that fathers or partners share childcare and domestic responsibilities equitably and reduce the gender gap.



Key Messages





All working mothers need adequate maternity leave if they are to practice optimal breastfeeding. They should receive appropriate breaks, work-site facilities and support to breastfeed & express & store breastmilk.



Breastfeeding is teamwork & both parents need information & support for their different roles. Access to adequate paternity & parental leave can allow the non-breastfeeding parent to have time to share household responsibilities & provide other support to enable the mother to breastfeed.



A supportive workplace includes providing maternity/paternity entitlements to parents will enable continued breastfeeding & thus improve child health. This results in less absenteeism & enhanced productivity at work which is beneficial for employers as well.



When maternity & parental leave policies are implemented, they can improve breastfeeding. There is a need to mobilise resources to advocate, monitor, evaluate & enforce policies that promote, protect & support breastfeeding and the rights of parents & children.



Parents need support from the whole society to enable breastfeeding. A Warm Chain of Support for breastfeeding needs to be established including the health sector, workplace & community.

Impact of duration and uptake of maternity/parental leave on breastfeeding



Without government protection for all people who choose to breastfeed, the region where one lives will often predict breastfeeding intention and duration.

Protections should be put in place to ensure that the career progression of women is not negatively impacted.



Maternity leave

- The association between short, unpaid leave following birth & lower rates of breastfeeding has long been recognised.
- Working women in the formal sectors often return to work early or utilise their maternity leave fully before the child reaches six months & this often affects exclusive breastfeeding.
- Length of maternity leave has an impact on breastfeeding rates. The level of remuneration, with higher pay resulting in a higher likelihood of leave uptake & a longer duration of leave, which is positive for breastfeeding.

Parental leave/Paternity leave

- Some parents are not eligible for different kinds of leave, or the payment does not allow for a decent living in some countries.
- Absence or inadequate paternity leave prevents fathers from supporting breastfeeding in the early days of their newborn infants.

Working parents' needs to enable breastfeeding



To enable early, exclusive and continued breastfeeding, parents need:

- At least 6 months of paid maternity leave and at least 15 days of paternity leave
- Information on the advantages of breastfeeding, their rights to breastfeed & the right to maternity/parental leave
- Parental leave that allows the inclusion of fathers/partners in the support of breastfeeding
- Supportive employers and workplace when they return to work

- Legislation that provides maternity protection to all working pregnant & lactating women
- Protection against predatory marketing practices from the commercial milk formula industry by adopting & enforcing the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes
- Hygienic breastfeeding rooms, storage facilities, breastfeeding breaks & access to childcare
- Breastfeeding counselling & support during both the antenatal & postnatal period, to build their confidence & skills



How to improve maternity, paternity & parental leave & breastfeeding for working parents





Government/Policy makers

- Pass laws to provide paid maternity leave for ≥ 6 months through public sector funds
- Improve coverage of paternity and parental leave legislation
- Develop systems for funding of maternity & paternity protection
- Enforce the provision of Maternity Protection as a matter of policy among employers
- Make it a legal requirement to provide breastfeeding rooms & breastfeeding breaks
- Promote initiatives by personnel to support breastfeeding in formal & informal workplaces
- Advocate for family-friendly workplaces & public places
- Create & facilitate a breastfeeding-friendly accreditation package
- Ask health insurance companies to cover breastfeeding support
- Allow flexibility for parents to take other leaves after maternity leave has ended
- Enact & monitor the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes regularly



Employers and Trade Unions

- Guarantee \geq 6 months of paid maternity leave & provide paternity leave
- Make sure leave entitlements information is clear for parents & explain how to obtain it
- Provide suitable breastfeeding rooms & allow enough break time to express breastmilk or breastfeed
- Arrange or subsidise for childcare facilities to be available near the workplace
- Offer flexible work schedules & telework options
- Enroll your workplace as an accredited breastfeeding-friendly workplace
- Ensure no employment discrimination against mothers or fathers who take parental leave.
- Involve employees & union groups when developing breastfeeding-friendly policies
- Union groups should advocate for longer leave and monitor the use of the leaves



Health sector

- Health professionals involved in occupational health, should be concerned with maternity protection, paternal and parental leave and maintaining breastfeeding as an important occupational issue.
- Health workers caring for expectant parents, should support and help them antenatally and postnatally to plan their leave to enable exclusive and continued breastfeeding.



Parents

- Speak with your employer as early as possible about maternity/paternity/parental leave and plans for breastfeeding at the workplace.
- Negotiate your return-to-work conditions to maintain your ability to breastfeed.
- Make a plan for returning to work that will work for you and your baby.
- Support the breastfeeding mother to establish and maintain breastfeeding before, upon and after each of you return to work.



Community & other Advocates

- Encourage countries to work towards improving maternity/parental protection
- Advocate for parental leave to be applicable also in the informal work sector
- Inform employers about the need & benefits to invest in supporting breastfeeding at their workplace
- Advocate for breastfeeding rooms at the workplace, breastfeeding breaks & flexible working hours
- Encourage employers & others, who have seen the benefits of parental leave to publicise & recommend it to others.
- Approach government officials & help them to understand about the value of exclusive breastfeeding, extended maternity & paternity leave & breastfeeding-friendly workplaces
- Organise breastfeeding support groups for working parents
- Mobilise related civil societies to continue advocacy for the right to paid leave for working parents
- Inspire fathers to create father groups to share how to support their partner in childcare & breastfeeding

BREASTFEEDING

is one of the best investments in children's and women's health and survival.

The cost of not breastfeeding has enormous implications at the individual, family and societal level.



JOIN THE #WBW2023 CAMPAIGN:

1. [Pledge](#) & [Report](#) your #WBW2023 activities (physical and/or virtual)
2. Participate in the #WBW2023 Ask Me Anything (AMA)
3. Follow the [WBW website](#) & social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#)) for more activity ideas & updates
4. Use our campaign hashtags in your social media posts:

#WBW2023

#WABA

#breastfeeding

#SDGs

#WarmChain

#worldbreastfeedingweek2023

#EnablingBreastfeeding

#MakingADifference

#EmpoweringParentsCampaign

#buildingbackbetter