

Administrative Policy No. 18.88

Subject: Infants at Work

Information Contact: Human Resources Division

Authorizing Source: Executive Order 13-06 Improving the Health and Productivity of State Employees and Access to Healthy Foods in State Facilities
Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978
Administrative Policy 18.85 Lactating Employees in the Workplace
RCW 43.70.640

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Approved By: **ORIGINAL SIGNED BY WENDY LONG**
Senior Director, Human Resources Division

Purpose

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) infants at work (IAW) policy is established to support the IAW program for eligible employees who are new parents or legal guardians to spend time with their infant within the first six months of life while continuing to work. Research proves that allowing a parent and infant to remain together in this earliest stage of life supports critical bonding, healthy infant brain development, parental well-being, and enables breast-feeding, which all improve lifelong health.

Background

The program is designed to accommodate an employee's participation with a single infant. Prior to submitting an application packet, the parent is required to have a pre-meeting with their appointing authority or delegate.

Scope

This policy applies to all DSHS programs and employees in eligible positions. For represented employees, when provisions of agency policies conflict with collective bargaining agreements (CBA), the CBA supersedes the specific provisions with which it conflicts.

Definitions

Designated care provider (DCP): A permanent DSHS employee who has completed the probationary period and who volunteers to care for the infant during work hours when the parent or guardian is unavailable.

Infant: A child of the parent, through birth, adoption, legal guardianship, who is six weeks to six months old.

Parent: For the purpose of this policy, a permanent DSHS employee who has completed their probationary or trial service period, who has had a child through birth, adoption, or designated legal guardianship. Employees still serving a trial service period may be eligible for the program on a case by case basis.

Policy Requirements

1. This policy will support the use of an IAW program and may allow employees who need or want to return to work to bring their infant into the workplace, supporting a positive work/life balance, and honoring their contributions to DSHS.
 - a. Benefits for employees:
 - i. Lower child care costs;
 - ii. Better financial stability;
 - iii. Employees feel supported at work;
 - iv. Enables the working parent to be more involved with his or her infant; and
 - v. Enables breast-feeding mothers to maintain exclusive breast-feeding.
 - b. Benefits for DSHS:
 - i. Employees may return to work sooner following the birth or adoption of the newborn, if they desire;
 - ii. Attractive benefit that may be used for recruitment;
 - iii. Increased retention, lower turnover costs;
 - iv. Increased employee loyalty; and
 - v. Increased morale.
2. Program participation:
 - a. Participation in the IAW program will typically be considered only for parents working in an office setting. Exclusions may include, but are not limited to positions:
 - i. Requiring field work;
 - ii. Working in an institution;
 - iii. Working in a warehouse environment;
 - iv. Requiring excessive travel on state time;
 - v. Requiring regular in-person contact with the public; or
 - vi. Conducting investigations or adjudicative processes.

- b. The appointing authority or designee will determine if the parent's position is eligible for the program.
- c. The appointing authority will determine if the work location is suitable for the program. For community-based staff with eligible locations, outside of the DSHS headquarters offices, the parent will be required to follow the building use guidelines at the current work site. Individual plans will be developed based on the work location.
- d. The parent may only participate in the IAW program with one infant at a time between the ages of six weeks and six months old.
- e. Employees involved in corrective or disciplinary action within the last six months may not be eligible to participate in this program.
- f. The parent must choose two DCPs who will care for the infant if the parent must conduct official state business which the infant cannot attend.
 - i. DCPs may not be a direct report employee to the parent;
 - ii. DCPs may only provide infrequent care to the infant, typically not more than one hour per day when the parent is unavailable;
 - iii. DCPs may not simultaneously participate in this program as a parent and as a DCP for another parent's child, except in rare situations, subject to approval from the employee's supervisor.
- g. To be eligible for the program, the parent must contact the appropriate appointing authority or designee to schedule a time for a workspace consultation. The consultation will include reviewing procedures for safety, security, and evacuations.
- h. Supervisors of the parent and DCPs have input about whether or not the parent or DCP may participate, and continue participation in this program. The appointing authority or designee determines final approval or denial of the IAW request. Approval may be reconsidered if circumstances change.
 - i. If parents or DCPs disagree with the appointing authority's decision, they may appeal in writing to the DSHS senior director of human resources (HR).
 - ii. The HR senior director must review the appeal in cooperation with the appointing authority or designee to determine the disposition of the appeal.
 - iii. The HR senior director must provide a final determination in writing.

3. Health and Safety

- a. The parent and DCPs must receive training and demonstrate the ability to adhere to all safety and emergency response procedures to maintain a safe working environment while caring for an infant in the workplace.
- b. The infant, parent, and DCPs are all strongly encouraged to be vaccinated, as appropriate for age, in accordance with state law requirements and the

recommendations of the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

- c. Current recommended immunization schedules are published by the CDC and are available at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd/vaccines-age.html>
 - d. A sick infant must not be brought to work. The agency adopts the [CDC's recommendations](#) for inclusion or exclusion of children from out of home care.
 - e. The parent must take the infant home if the infant:
 - i. Becomes sick while in the workplace;
 - ii. Is disruptive for a prolonged period of time;
 - iii. Causes significant distraction in the work place; or
 - iv. Prevents the parent from accomplishing work.
 - f. The decision to take the infant home may be made by either the parent or the parent's supervisor or manager. If the infant is taken home, the parent must submit leave in accordance with the applicable agency policy or CBA.
4. Feeding and changing the Infant:
- a. DSHS will provide a private space with a locking door for infant feeding. These rooms will be listed in the individual plan developed for each participant based on their work location.
 - b. Infant diaper and clothing changes may only take place in designated areas with changing tables.
 - i. The parent must provide a sealing diaper container, which will be stored in one of the designated restrooms;
 - ii. All used cloth and disposable diapers, and any excessively soiled infant clothing, must be stored in the diaper container;
 - iii. The parent must empty the diaper container and remove the soiled diapers and clothing from the building at the end of each day; and
 - iv. The DSHS garbage cans must not be used for disposal of cloth or disposable diapers for any reason.
5. Conducting business:
- a. Parents must provide care for the infant while performing their job duties. The parent and DCP may flex their work hours with approval from their supervisor.
 - b. The infant must be located primarily in the parent's work station during the workday, unless care is being provided by an approved DCP. When the infant is with an approved DCP, they should reside in the DCP's work station.

- c. The parent must provide the necessary furniture and equipment suitable to meet the infant's needs, ensuring that the equipment is not disruptive.
- d. Meeting facilitator(s) must be notified in advance if the parent will bring the infant to an internal meeting.
 - i. If the infant becomes disruptive, the parent must remove the infant from the meeting;
 - ii. If the parent's attendance at the meeting is required, the parent must contact a DCP to care for the infant for the duration of the meeting.
- e. The parent is not authorized to travel with the infant while driving or riding in state owned or leased vehicles.

The following forms for participation are found by using the search by form number option in the [DSHS Forms Library](#).

03-498 Infants at Work (IAW) Care Provider Agreement

03-499 Infants at Work (IAW) Waiver of Liability and Assumption of Risk

03-500 Infants at Work (IAW) Program Individual Plan

¹ Included links to participation forms

