

FIVE STEPS TO AN EASIER RETURN TO EMPLOYMENT OR EDUCATION

You've imagined it for weeks and probably done your fair share of worrying. The big day has arrived for you to either return to paid work or perhaps further your education! But the site will not allow you to bring your baby with you. What to do? Take a big breath and gather—or at least identify—everything you need to take with you each day prior. With a little preparation, you'll help the first few days go as smoothly as possible.

Step 1: Items you'll need

Items for your baby

- Extra baby clothes, nappies and wipes for your childcare provider
- Emergency phone numbers written out for your childcare provider
- Enough expressed milk for one day, plus a little extra.
- Food for your baby, if baby is over six months
- Bib(s), if your little one is drooling up a storm from teething!
- Baby's favorite toy/object, if childcare permits it

Items for you

- Purse or bag with work/school items needed the next day
- Cell phone and cord (be sure to charge it the night prior!)
- Water bottle
- Human milk storage bags/container
- Breast pump and all its parts or an adequately sized container for hand expressing, along with whatever you need for washing and drying your equipment
- A cooler bag and ice pack for transporting milk (and awareness of where you plan to express and store your human milk)
- A printed picture of your baby or recorded baby giggles on your cell phone, to help get your milk flowing (optional)
- A detailed list of tasks to do when you wake up. Include, for example, "Take expressed milk out of the freezer/fridge"!

Step 2: Morning feeding

Wake up and feed your baby right away (you may need to get up a bit earlier than usual even if your baby is still sleepy). Breastfeed again if possible before you leave home, or if not at childcare. Then, check in with your childcare provider periodically during the day to be sure all is going well.

Step 3: Lunch break

At lunchtime, arrange to go to your baby to nurse, even if only for the first day or two. Whenever your baby would normally be breastfeeding, pump or hand express at every opportunity that you are legally entitled to in order to maintain your supply. If you want to increase your expressed milk output, consider hand expressing at the end of some pumping sessions and/or massaging your breasts while expressing/pumping.

Step 4: Get ready to head home

At the end of the day, collect your expressed milk and pumping equipment to take home. As soon as you can, transfer the milk to the refrigerator or freezer, anticipating what you will need to go to childcare the next day. Then, make sure all your gear is ready for the next time. If you have a dedicated bag, it makes it much easier to get into a routine of being sure everything is ready and together in one place.

Step 5: End of the Day

At the end of the day, breastfeed your baby when you reunite, and enjoy the opportunity for a relaxed time to reconnect with your baby. Talk to your childcare provider about how the day went. Once home, breastfeed on demand to keep up your milk supply and cuddle time. Anticipate that your baby may want to feed more frequently during the time that you are together.

There will always be some days that seem harder than others. You might occasionally wonder whether it's worth carrying on breastfeeding when you have to fit in expressing and feeding around the demands of work or study. Remember all the reasons it is so worth it! Talk to your employer if your schedule or lack of adequate expressing accommodations becomes an issue. And don't forget to reach out to a local La Leche League (LLL) Leader with any concerns. (To find one near you, go to <https://www.llli.org/get-help/>)

A LLL Leader will help you find a path that works for you, and will always listen with a kind and non-judgemental ear.

To print out this handy tip sheet, **click here**.

Special thanks to Denise Ives, La Leche League Leader in Dunedin, New Zealand, for sharing several of these tips with us! For more helpful advice on combining work and breastfeeding, check out this link: <https://www.llli.org/breastfeeding-info/working-and-breastfeeding/>