

Build Breastfeeding-Supportive Teams

Why build a breastfeeding team?

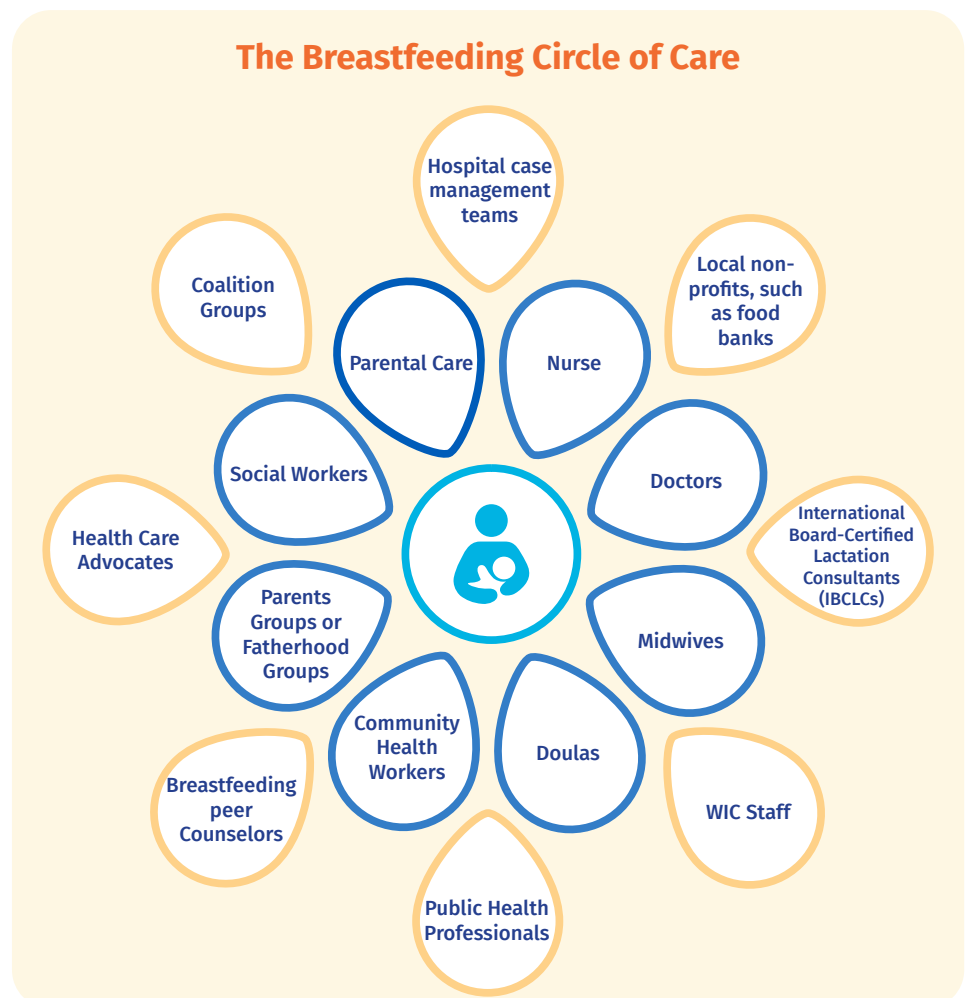
Breastfeeding has benefits for both baby and mom, and lifelong impacts on community health. In Texas, over 80% of moms start breastfeeding but less than 24% reach the recommended goal of exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months. In many areas, resources and up-to-date information can be hard to find. This can make it challenging for moms to get off to the right start or to continue breastfeeding. Improving access to quality breastfeeding care can be a hard problem to solve. Finding breastfeeding champions—individuals and/or organizations—is the first step.

The Collective Impact approach starts with getting organized and creating a unified team from many sectors. Next, the team sets a goal and works together to achieve it. Use the approach to create greater impact in your community is than you or your individual organization could have on its own.

Who to recruit to your team?

Before and after birth, parents interact with many organizations and individuals that can champion breastfeeding. Review the Breastfeeding Circle of Care (BF COC) diagram to help support the needs of parents. To help build your team, ask yourself:

- *Do you have contacts with some of the groups represented in the BF COC?*
- *What unique perspective will they bring to the team?*
- *How do they (can they) help support breastfeeding moms and babies?*
- *Do they have or need breastfeeding skills and knowledge?*





- *Do they provide services for families who struggle to find resources?*

Collective Impact isn't limited to what one person or organization can do on their own. To achieve a stronger impact, it takes all of us. Remember to build a team beyond your own organization and the health care sector. Many interested community members can play a role.

How to bring the team together.

The next step is to get everyone working together. Here's how you can increase your community impact:

Use the RFTS PowerPoint to talk about breastfeeding in your community.

Find the Problem

- Have all team members share their vision for change. Help the team find a common understanding of breastfeeding information, care, and resource gaps. These will be unique to your community.

Work Together to Solve Problems

- Brainstorm and identify possible solutions. Use the **SMARTIE goals tool** to create a Collective Impact goal. Create buy-in from the group to take ownership of actionable steps to bring the solutions to life.

Measure Success Together

- Reach agreement on how to measure success. How will you track and report your goals? Who will report? Start with a short list of common signs that the solutions are having a positive effect.

Keep in Touch

- Collaboration cannot happen in one meeting. It involves regular information sharing and building on progress over time. Can some partners meet more often than others? Defining a process for how and when your team(s) will work together is important to success.

Find the Leaders

- People who can give more of their time and energy to the team's work should take on more leadership roles. They can help guide the team's goals, plans, and activities. Leaders can also connect with the public, push for policy changes, and find the resources the team needs.

Learn more about **Collective Impact** or reach out to the DSHS Infant Health team at **InfantHealth@dshs.texas.gov** for guidance on building impactful breastfeeding support teams.



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