
380.60

Clinic Environment

Comfort and Safety

Introduction This section presents suggestions to create a safe and comfortable clinic environment that will promote the purposes of the WIC Program.

Provide safe environment Follow these suggestions to provide a safe environment:

- Childproof the clinic area.
- Barricade open stairways that are not in use.
- Position electrical cords away from traffic areas or tape cords to the floor, to prevent tripping.

Limit distractions Follow these suggestions to limit the distractions and noise level of the clinic:

- Select clinic sites with carpeted floor areas.
- Keep audiovisual equipment away from areas where one-to-one encounters occur.
- Keep room temperatures as comfortable as possible.
- Designate a supervised play area for children.

Maintain confidentiality Assuring participant confidentiality is critical in WIC clinics. This can be accomplished by:

- Arranging clinic stations to minimize the ability to overhear other clinic conversations (e.g., using separate rooms or dividers, or increase distance between stations, etc.).
- Using alternate methods to collect participant data to avoid others overhearing clinic conversations. Policy 380.60a provides documents that can be used to collect participant information without the participant verbally providing the information.
- Minimizing the computer screen or log-out of the data system when a computer is not in use.

Learning Environment

Introduction

This section presents suggestions to create a positive environment for the nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion purposes of the WIC Program.

Create a positive learning environment

Follow these suggestions to create a positive environment for nutrition education:

- Allow the participant to speak honestly by providing privacy for interviews.
 - Lessen barriers between you and the participant and promote rapport by:
 - Maintaining eye contact and focusing on the participant and not on the computer,
 - Shifting visual obstacles, such as computers, monitors, and large desk accessories to the side so they are not physical barriers between staff and participants,
 - Sitting beside the participant.
 - Make use of waiting time between stations by providing a variety of nutrition education materials throughout the clinic, including posters, bulletin boards, educational displays, and newsletters.
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National WIC Association (NWA) breastfeeding promotion

Follow the goals from the National WIC Association's (NWA's) National Breastfeeding Strategic Plan and steps from the NWA's Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics.

The goals in the NWA National Breastfeeding Strategic Plan include the following:

- Promote and support exclusive breastfeeding for all mothers,
- All WIC staff members are knowledgeable and skilled in breastfeeding promotion and support,
- WIC is recognized as a community resource for breastfeeding promotion and support, and
- NWA and WIC agencies advocate for the development and implementation of local, state, and federal policies and procedures that protect, support, and promote breastfeeding.

The NWA's Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC clinics include:

- Step 1: Present exclusive breastfeeding as the norm for all mothers and babies,
 - Step 2: Provide an appropriate breastfeeding friendly environment,
 - Step 3: Ensure access to competently trained breastfeeding staff at each WIC clinic,
 - Step 4: Develop procedures to accommodate breastfeeding mothers and babies,
 - Step 5: Mentor and train all staff to become competent breastfeeding advocates and/or counselors, and
 - Step 6: Support exclusive breastfeeding through assessment, evaluation, and assistance.
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Learning Environment, Continued

National WIC Association (NWA) breastfeeding promotion, continued

The NWA's National Breastfeeding Strategic Plan and Six Steps to Achieve Breastfeeding Goals for WIC Clinics can be found at <http://www.nwica.org/?q=advocacy/d11>.

Promote breastfeeding as feeding method

Follow these other suggestions to promote breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding:

- Select educational materials that portray breastfeeding as the preferred infant feeding method.
 - Use print and audiovisual materials and office supplies that are free of formula product names.
 - Communicate clear endorsements of breastfeeding.
 - Integrate breastfeeding promotion into each prenatal nutrition education contact.
 - Include participant's family and friends in breastfeeding education and support sessions.
 - Store formula samples out of view.
 - Develop a policy that discourages staff from accepting formula from manufacturers for personal use.
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Promote breastfeeding in the clinic waiting area

Use the clinic waiting area advantageously to help women recognize breastfeeding as the "norm" rather than the exception. Follow these suggestions to provide an environment where women feel comfortable breastfeeding their infants:

- Display posters, pins, and buttons that promote breastfeeding.
 - Create a Breastfeeding Honor Roll featuring breastfeeding moms and babies.
 - Provide comfortable chairs with arms.
 - Locate the breastfeeding area away from the clinic entrance.
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Collaboration

Introduction

This section discusses how to inform participants of potential services that may be available to them while attending the WIC Clinic.

Informing participants of non-WIC services

Many times other programs collaborate with the WIC Program and may be onsite during a WIC clinic. Participants are often able to utilize these services while attending WIC appointments. This collaboration is strongly encouraged, however staff must ensure that participants understand that these services are not WIC services, they are voluntary, and are available in addition to their WIC benefits.