

Press Release

**Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
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Sowing the Seeds of Love: Preparing the Workforce Early

Breast feeding is not a choice, it's a responsibility.

With this in mind and as part of its efforts to support the "modern Filipino working woman, the government passed RA 10028, otherwise known as "Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009." One of the provisions of the law is the need for Private enterprises as well as government agencies to put up lactation stations in their workplaces. The DOLE fully supports the provision breastfeeding mothers in the workplace, will most likely encourage more Filipino babies to be breastfed.

As part of the celebration of the 50th Founding Anniversary of the ASEAN, the country had gathered representatives from the ASEAN community for the ASEAN Breastfeeding Forum from August 3-5 in Paranaque. This is to guarantee continued progress of the ASEAN on ensuring the health of infants and young children, there is a need to create enabling mechanisms that will prime governments, communities and families with this ideology.

Many breastfeeding support groups and advocates lauded the passing of Republic Act 10028 or the as solid support for reviving breastfeeding as a cultural practice in the Philippines. In the Philippines, a measly 30% of mothers end up breastfeeding their babies exclusively up to the first six months of life. This may be partially attributed to the fact that many Filipinas are also working mothers who have to return to work within two to three months of giving birth. Exclusive breastfeeding is known to be the most effective and economic way of nourishing infants.

RA 10028, otherwise known as "Expanded Breastfeeding Promotion Act of 2009, is considered as one of the country's best practices. The close network among government agencies, and partnership with non-governmental organization has made this possible.

The law requires "lactation periods" for breastfeeding employees, in addition to time-off for meals, to allow them time to express their breast milk. This period should be less no less than a total of 40 minutes for every eight-hour working period. Health institutions are encouraged to put up breast milk banks to store pasteurized breast milk donated by breastfeeding mothers. More importantly, the law, nursing mother-employees shall also be granted break intervals to breastfeed, aside from their regular time off for meals.

These measures shall ensure babies that are breastfed will become a productive member of the workforce as they are inclined to become healthier with better immune system. Dr. Valeros cited provisions in the law that require lactation stations to have adequate equipment and facilities, such as a lavatory, refrigeration or cooling station for storing breastmilk, electrical outlets for breast pumps and a table and comfortable seats.

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