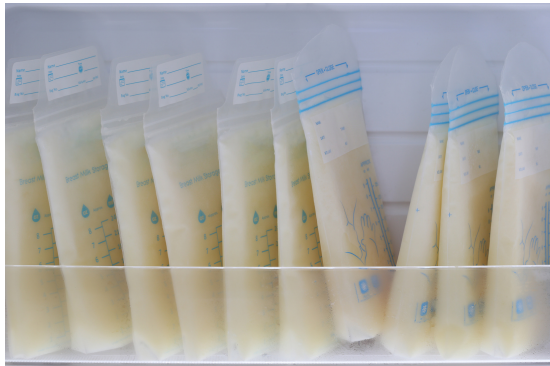


Handling Breastmilk in Child Care Homes

There are a few steps to ensure that breastmilk is stored safely and properly ready for the child it's for.

Storage:

Whether families are bringing bottles of breastmilk or frozen, the first thing you need to do is ensure all bottles, bags, or other storage containers, are labeled with the child's name and the date they were prepared (expressed or thawed and poured into the bottle, or expressed if frozen). Store away from other foods to prevent cross-contamination.



Preparation:

To safely warm breastmilk, a bag or bottle can be placed in any container of hot water; there are bottle warmers made specifically for this purpose, but a small crock pot of water kept on "warm" or even a mug of water heated by a kettle or microwave. *Never microwave breastmilk.* Microwaving can create hot spots in the milk, which can burn the baby's mouth. These hot spots can also get hot enough to denature the probiotics and antibodies present in milk. Be aware that this can happen if your bottle warmer is too hot-- breastmilk should not be heated higher than 122 degrees Fahrenheit.

Feeding:

Babies should always be held while being fed. This prevents choking, and just as importantly, supports their social and emotional growth and development. Feeding is a time for bonding and affection, and babies need to be held and talked or sung to, to nourish them emotionally as well as physically.

