



The Hong Kong Paediatric Society  
香港兒科醫學會

## **The Hong Kong Paediatric Society** **Position Statement on Promotion of Breastfeeding 2014**

*Paediatricians strongly believe in the value of Breastfeeding and regard such practice as a basic human right. Breast milk is the best food for all babies. Human milk is best for human and animal milk is best for animals. It is the duty of all human adults to ensure that all our babies be given breast milk to ensure optimum infant nutrition and to enhance their attainment of highest potential in life. It is also the prime duty of ALL Paediatricians to take care of babies and families and provide them with the best available information to make informed choices for the best nutrition for their babies.*

The Hong Kong Paediatric Society (HKPS), consisting of paediatricians and other child health professionals, is a professional body established in 1962 and has been committed to the promotion and support of breastfeeding throughout the past five decades. We have published several documents on the issue including (i) *1999 Study on “Breast Milk Substitutes in Hong Kong”*; (ii) *2003 HKPS Guideline on Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes*; (iii) *Position Statement on Promotion of Breastfeeding 2011*; and (iv) *Position Statement on Promotion of Breastfeeding 2012*. We are affiliated to the International Pediatric Association (IPA) and are committed to the promotion of the World Health Organization (WHO) Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes in its original vision and all subsequent amendments.

In view of the current situation in Hong Kong that many mothers stop exclusive breastfeeding prematurely before the recommended period of six months, we strongly urge that the HKSAR Government should be obliged to implement measures to promote and to support sustained breastfeeding practice in Hong Kong and not just issuing a Code which is already well elaborated by the World Health Organization and a fact which is too familiar to all literates in Hong Kong. Active and proactive measures which the HKSAR Government should initiate, promulgate, implement, support, promote and assess (with measurable outcome deliverables) consist of the following measures to facilitate mothers and families who have decided to provide breastfeeding to their babies, namely

1. Follow the WHO code on breastfeeding to recommend exclusive breastfeeding for those below six months of age and continue breastfeeding along with appropriate supplementary food up to two years or beyond to meet their evolving nutritional requirements. Follow-up formula is therefore unnecessary.
2. Enhance public education starting from preschool children to all stages of adulthood on the value and importance of breastfeeding as well as its beneficial effect on mother-baby bonding and on the lactating mother. Increase public awareness and acceptance of breastfeeding in public areas.

3. Introduce legislation to regulate the marketing of breast milk substitutes and infant nutrition products with clear and mandatory sanction measures to ensure good compliance.
4. Reinforce training for child health professionals on breastfeeding and the support to mothers in both public and private healthcare settings.
5. Support breastfeeding in the community through setting up legislation to ensure adequate breastfeeding facilities in public areas such as shopping malls and public transportation.
6. Enforce the breastfeeding support policy and its implementation in all government departments to facilitate breastfeeding in workplace.
7. Encourage the private enterprises to provide breastfeeding facilities to their staff in workplace.
8. Extend the maternity leave for mothers who are breastfeeding to continue the practice at home and avoid premature stop of breastfeeding before six months of age.
9. Set up the Human Milk Bank to support breastfeeding for mothers who cannot provide breastfeeding themselves or have inadequate breast milk to their babies due to medical or social circumstances.
10. Strictly prohibit delivery of free samples of breast milk substitutes to mothers, to hospitals in both public and private sectors and to healthcare professionals. Ensure all the information shared to public and professionals to be ethical, scientific and evidence-based, non-biased and factual.

We believe that effective promotion of breastfeeding can only be achieved through the concerted effort of the HKSAR government, the child health professionals, the public, the industries and the community as a whole. Implementing the Hong Kong Code alone would not serve the purpose. We do not fully agree with the content of the Hong Kong Code especially regarding the age limit up to three years, the bundling of food labeling in the Code and lack of sanction measures in the regulation of human milk substitutes. We look forward to an "above-code" set of measures in the community including legislation, medical and social support, breastfeeding friendly environment and others for better promotion of breastfeeding and NOT just the Code.

The Hong Kong Paediatric Society has committed to, is currently promoting and will continue to be advocating on breastfeeding to all babies with all our possible capacities. We would work closely with the HKSAR government and all the stakeholders to safeguard the best nutrition for our babies.

***Promotion of Breastfeeding is a life-long commitment of our Society, our Members and all the Paediatricians.***

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