This presentation was designed for use by Baby-Friendly USA, Inc. for the purposes of providing education via the babyfriendlyusa.org website to individuals and facilities seeking information about the Baby-Friendly process. Facilities interested in working towards Baby-Friendly designation may print copies of this for the purposes of providing education to their staff. It may not be used by others in part or in its entirety without the permission of Baby-Friendly USA, Inc.

There is much information and misinformation circulating regarding what the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative is all about. This presentation is designed to set the record straight. It is presented in a question and answer format.

We hope this helps bring you some clarity about the program.
We receive many questions about the use of infant formula in Baby-Friendly designated facilities. The next few slides will go through some of the most commonly asked ones.

Is infant formula forbidden to be used in a Baby-Friendly designated facility?

Baby-Friendly facilities have policies in place that support optimal infant nutrition and mother-baby bonding. Facility policies and protocols must be followed by all staff. In these policies, formula is not routinely provided. Mothers' requests for formula must be explored and her concerns addressed. She must be informed of the health consequences. The education and informed consent should be documented in the record.
Is a Baby-Friendly designated hospital required to force all mothers to breastfeed?

Baby-Friendly hospitals are expected to treat ALL mothers with dignity and respect. A mother’s infant feeding choice should be explored and education offered when breastfeeding is not chosen. Efforts should be made to assist the mother with overcoming any barriers to breastfeeding. After receiving patient centered education, her final choice is respected.
It is very important to note that the philosophy of Baby-Friendly USA is that every baby born in a Baby-Friendly designated facility is SPECIAL regardless of how it is being fed.

Every mother and baby must receive the same high quality care, regardless of infant feeding method.

Because every mother and baby is special, they deserve to be offered the best evidence based information and care. The evidence shows that BREASTFEEDING is the normal as well as optimal infant nutrition. Baby-Friendly hospitals should help mothers attain the knowledge, skills and confidence to attain that norm.
If mothers plan to formula feed, must they bring their own formula to a Baby-Friendly designated hospital?

No. A Baby-Friendly designated facility may provide infant formula to mothers who are formula feeding however, it must be purchased, like all other food and products, at a fair market price.

The next questions focus on the care provided at a Baby-Friendly designated hospital.
Mothers are tired after giving birth, why should their babies stay with them during the hospital stay? Shouldn’t they rest?

Studies show that mothers rest better when the babies are with them. In addition, the early post partum period is a very important time for mothers and babies to learn about each other. They learn to recognize and respond to each others smells and cues. What better place for this to happen than in the supportive and educational environment of the Baby-Friendly designated birth facility.

We often hear that mothers are tired after giving birth, why are they expected to keep their babies with them during the hospital stay? Shouldn’t they spend their time resting?

This is a VERY important question and we are glad it is being asked. Studies show that mothers actually rest better when the babies are with them. In addition, the early post partum period is a very important time for mothers and babies to learn about each other. They learn to recognize and respond to each others smells and cues. What better place for this to happen than in the supportive and educational environment of the Baby-Friendly designated birth facility.

This experience sets them up for the greatest success for when they are discharged and at home on their own with the baby.
Are pacifiers allowed in a Baby-Friendly facility?

Please review Step 9 in the Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria. They may not be routinely used with breastfeeding infants, but are allowed during painful procedures. The facility must have a plan for removing the pacifier once the procedure is complete.

Are pacifiers allowed in a Baby-Friendly facility?

We ask you to please read the information for Step 9 in the Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria.

Here you will see that pacifiers may not be routinely used with breastfeeding infants, but are allowed during painful procedures. The facility must have a plan for removing the pacifier once the procedure is complete.

Now let’s look at some questions that focus on some of the administrative aspects of the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.
We receive a lot of questions about staffing. Most specifically, What number and type of staff are required at Baby-Friendly designated facilities?

The Baby-Friendly assessment does not look at the number or type of credentialed providers at a facility. Each facility should make this decision based on the needs of their patient population. Baby-Friendly assesses the amount and quality of breastfeeding training provided to the staff.

Some facility questions reflect some concerns about getting started with the process...
Must facilities have a certain number of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding already in place in order to START the Baby-Friendly journey?

No. Every facility starts at a different point and the length of their journey will vary according to their specific challenges. The 4-D Pathway to Baby-Friendly designation was intentionally designed to meet each facility at their own specific starting point.

Finally, a big concern has to do with discharge bags
If we stop giving out gift bags to mothers upon discharge, will they choose to give birth at another facility?

Baby-Friendly designated facilities provide mothers with the best discharge gift ever...

...a healthy baby that was provided excellent care for the best start in life.

We hope this helps address some of the concerns you may have had about the Baby-Friendly process.