



THE BABY
FRIENDLY
INITIATIVE

unicef 
UNITED KINGDOM

UNICEF UK BABY FRIENDLY QUALIFICATION FRAMEWORK

Making babies' health and wellbeing everybody's business



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the **Qualifications Framework** from the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative.

This new programme, aimed at anyone working in UK public services, is designed to increase knowledge and capacity related to infant feeding and very early child development.

The Framework is also designed to recognise the dedication and expertise of those working in the field of infant feeding and very early child development, by providing a recognisable and prestigious qualification that can act as quality assurance for employers, colleagues and the general public.

It is hoped that the Framework will positively influence cultural change within the UK as more people gain a better understanding of the significance of infant feeding and very early child development on human health and wellbeing.



WHO IS THIS FOR?

The Framework is aimed at anyone working in **infant feeding and early relationship building** in the UK.

There are three separate, but complimentary, qualifications designed to meet the needs of a range of roles and responsibilities:

ADVOCATES

Advocates are those who advocate (or would like to advocate) for infant feeding and/or the Baby Friendly standards within their sphere of practice/influence. Advocates could be working in UK public services, in a charity or professional association. Advocates would include managers at all levels who would like more in-depth understanding of infant feeding, the standards and the application of the evidence into public services (including the potential for improving public health). Advocates could also include allied professionals whose practice brings them into contact with babies, their mothers and their families – who would like a better understanding of how to offer support and appropriate referral as required.

PRACTITIONERS

Practitioners are those working clinically with mothers to support infant feeding and very early child development. Practitioners are staff who have received basic training and would like to learn more. They undertake (or would like to undertake) extra responsibilities such as mentoring and training colleagues, teaching and supporting parents, undertaking audits etc. to support the implementation of the Baby Friendly standards and other initiatives.

LEADERS

Leaders are those co-ordinating/leading on infant feeding and/or the implementation of the Baby Friendly standards in public services. Leaders are the staff who project manage infant feeding services and/or Baby Friendly on a day to day basis, including those who provide specialist services. This qualification level is also available to participants who are not currently in a lead role, but are interested in career progression. In this case, they would need to demonstrate that they have proactively sought experience in assisting the lead with strategic coordination, and thus would be capable of achieving the requirements outlined for the leadership qualification.

THE FRAMEWORK

1. VISION STATEMENTS AND CAPABILITIES

The Framework is based on **six vision statements** which describe what is needed to improve outcomes for babies, their mothers and families related to infant feeding in the UK. Under each vision statement there are separate lists of **capabilities** for advocates, practitioners and leaders. These describe the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for learners to contribute to making the vision statements a reality.

2. PORTFOLIOS

Participants are asked to complete a portfolio of their learning, experience and reflection related to each vision statement and associated capabilities. There are short essays, activities and reflective exercises to complete. Participants are supported to work at their own pace and in ways that enable personal development over a six-month period. This structured framework is intended to support the learner to evidence the knowledge and skills they already have, while also developing a deeper knowledge and understanding of infant feeding and very early child development, including how to implement and advocate for evidence based practice within their own sphere of practice.

3. RESOURCES

The framework does not involve a taught course; rather a list of suggested learning resources is provided for each vision statement and this is designed to guide the participant as they work towards meeting the capabilities. However, it is not an exhaustive list; participants are also encouraged to use independently sourced material and their own knowledge and experience to complete their portfolio.

4. MODERATION AND QUALIFICATION

All portfolios are marked anonymously and then moderated externally. Advocates and practitioners will receive their qualification based on the results of marking and moderating their portfolio. For leaders, the portfolio will be used as the basis for one-to-one interviews to determine the extent of their knowledge and understanding. Qualifications will be awarded based on the combined results from the portfolio and interview.

For more information, including how to apply, please visit: [unicef.uk/qualificationframework](https://www.unicef.uk/qualificationframework)

VISION STATEMENTS

1. It is common knowledge that human milk, breastfeeding and very early child development are the foundation of short- and long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.
2. All relevant public service workers are educated to deliver evidence-based care related to infant feeding.
3. Effective, evidence based infant feeding services are available to all babies, their mothers and families.
4. The Baby Friendly Initiative is implemented in all relevant services.
5. The wider societal and cultural context of infant feeding in the UK supports optimum health and wellbeing outcomes.
6. The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the Code) and subsequent resolutions are implemented throughout public services.



VISION STATEMENTS AND CAPABILITIES

The advocate / practitioner / leader will be capable of each vision statement and the associated capabilities.

VISION STATEMENT 1

It is common knowledge that human milk, breastfeeding and very early child development are the foundation of short and long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.

THE ADVOCATE / PRACTITIONER / LEADER WILL BE CAPABLE OF:

ADVOCATE

- Explaining the health outcomes and impact of breastfeeding, from individual and family level, to macro level (public health and public cost implications).
- Comparing and contrasting the key differences between human milk and modified cow's milk.
- Explaining how early relationships impact on short-and long-term outcomes for babies.
- Outlining how the microbiome may be supported through birth and breastfeeding.
- Considering the evidence for the impact of early nutrition on epigenetic processes.
- Modelling sensitive, compassionate communication skills to support positive interactions and empowered decision making, for pregnant women and new mothers.

PRACTITIONER

- Demonstrating an understanding of the health outcomes and impact of breastfeeding on babies, their mothers, families and society.
- Comparing and contrasting the key differences between human milk and modified cow's milk.
- Explaining how early relationships impact on short-and long-term outcomes for babies.
- Discussing how the natural microbiome may be supported through birth and breastfeeding.
- Considering the evidence for the impact of early nutrition on epigenetic processes.
- Modelling sensitive, compassionate communication skills to support positive interactions and empowered decision making, for pregnant women and new mothers.

LEADER

- Evaluating the health outcomes and impact of breastfeeding, from individual and family level, to macro level (public health and public cost implications).
- Comparing and contrasting the key differences between human milk and modified cow's milk.
- Analysing how early relationships impact on short-and long-term outcomes for babies.
- Outlining how the microbiome may be supported through birth and breastfeeding.
- Considering the evidence for the impact of early nutrition on epigenetic processes.
- Utilising an in-depth and up to date knowledge base to influence their practice.
- Disseminating this knowledge strategically within their sphere of influence
- Utilising their knowledge to make appropriate links to positively influence wider public health initiatives.
- Modelling sensitive, compassionate communication skills to support positive interactions and empowered decision making, for pregnant women and new mothers.

VISION STATEMENT 2

All relevant public service workers are educated to deliver evidence-based care related to infant feeding.

THE ADVOCATE / PRACTITIONER / LEADER WILL BE CAPABLE OF:

ADVOCATE

- Demonstrating how they advance their own learning and remain up to date.
- Utilising opportunities to educate and inform colleagues.
- Advocating for adequate education for all staff within their sphere of influence.

PRACTITIONER

- Demonstrating how they advance their own learning and remain up to date.
- Facilitating effective teaching and learning sessions.
- Facilitating effective Practical Skills Reviews (PSR) linking theory to practice to consolidate learning.
- Applying the agreed evidence base to ensure that training remains contemporary and up to date.
- Describing how reflection and review improve learning.

LEADER

- Demonstrating how they advance their own learning and remain up to date, including monitoring and responding to emerging evidence as appropriate.
- Identifying the learning needs within their sphere of influence, considering strategies for how these can be met, including planning and advocacy
- Co-ordinating effective education programmes.
- Evaluating education programmes, identifying any gaps in learning and taking steps to address these as required.
- Analysing the emerging evidence and disseminating this appropriately to ensure that training remains contemporary and up to date.



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VISION STATEMENT 3

Effective, evidence based infant feeding services are available to all babies, their mothers and families.

THE ADVOCATE / PRACTITIONER / LEADER WILL BE CAPABLE OF:

ADVOCATE

- Demonstrating an understanding of how to support the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.
- Outlining the support required to ensure responsive and safer feeding for mothers and babies who are bottle feeding.
- Explaining the importance of love and secure attachment on a baby's neurological development.
- Enhancing service provision to support quality improvement within their sphere of practice.

PRACTITIONER

- Explaining anatomy and physiology of lactation and relevance for supporting milk production and responsive mothering.
- Describing how to support mother and baby as they learn to breastfeed, including understanding instinctive behaviours.
- Facilitating mothers to maximise the amount of breastmilk they give, including support for exclusive breastfeeding and the timely and appropriate introduction of other foods and fluids.
- Assessing breastfeeding: milk production and transfer.
- Identifying common challenges and explore how to prevent or overcome these and how to refer when appropriate.
- Assessing the support required to ensure responsive and safer feeding for mothers and babies who are bottle feeding.
- Enabling mothers to build their self confidence in their ability to feed and care for their baby.

LEADER

- Demonstrating in-depth and up to date knowledge and skills related to common and complex infant feeding practice and challenges.
- Modelling sensitive, compassionate communication to support positive interactions and empowered decision making.
- Co-ordinating effective, evidence-based services centred around local needs.
- Monitoring, evaluating and progressing services to improve outcomes
- Co-ordinating and/or facilitating a specialist service, including infant feeding assessment, treatment and appropriate referral.



VISION STATEMENT 4

The Baby Friendly Initiative is implemented in all relevant services.

THE ADVOCATE / PRACTITIONER / LEADER WILL BE CAPABLE OF:

ADVOCATE

- Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards and process.
- Advocating for the implementation and sustainability of the Baby Friendly Initiative within their own sphere of influence and practice.
- Advocating to ensure sustainability in order to protect service provision for the future.

PRACTITIONER

- Explaining how hospital and community practices can impact on early mother-baby interaction and the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.
- Demonstrating knowledge and understanding of the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards and process.
- Motivating colleagues and managers to support improved practice.
- Collaborating with others to support and inform the Baby Friendly action planning, monitoring, evaluation and sustainability.

LEADER

- Interpreting and applying the Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative standards and process.
- Engaging, motivating and negotiating across all levels to progress and sustain the Baby Friendly standards.
- Co-ordinating the effective implementation of the Baby Friendly Initiative within services including achieving sustainability.
- Collaborating with others to support and inform the Baby Friendly action planning, monitoring and evaluation process.



VISION STATEMENT 5

The wider societal and cultural context of infant feeding in the UK supports optimum health and wellbeing outcomes.

THE ADVOCATE / PRACTITIONER / LEADER WILL BE CAPABLE OF:

ADVOCATE

- Defining the societal and political contexts in the UK and how these affect outcomes.
- Analysing common barriers to initiating and sustaining breastfeeding and considering ways to address these within local communities.
- Working to normalise breastfeeding within their own sphere of influence.
- Interpreting negative messaging pertaining to infant feeding and knowing how to act accordingly.

PRACTITIONER

- Recognising the cultural and societal barriers to successful breastfeeding and using their knowledge and skills to support mothers and families to overcome these and so reach their breastfeeding goals.
- Exploring opportunities to positively influence the UK culture one mother/family at a time, by supporting individuals and families within their remit.
- Interpreting negative messaging pertaining to infant feeding and knowing how to act accordingly.

LEADER

- Examining the impact of societal and cultural influences on infant feeding and wellbeing.
- Implementing strategies to positively influence the culture within their sphere of influence.
- Reviewing the information that staff and families receive to ensure that this is accurate and effective.
- Interpreting negative messaging pertaining to infant feeding and knowing how to act accordingly.



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VISION STATEMENT 6

The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the Code) and subsequent resolutions are implemented throughout public services.

THE ADVOCATE / PRACTITIONER / LEADER WILL BE CAPABLE OF:

ADVOCATE

- Explaining how the Code is a tool to help protect babies' rights and can be incorporated into everyday practice.
- Upholding the Code within their own sphere of influence, being alert to any violations.
- Reviewing ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest related to the Code.

PRACTITIONER

- Explaining how the Code is a tool to help protect babies' rights and can be incorporated into everyday practice.
- Upholding the Code within their own sphere of practice and reporting any violations.

LEADER

- Interpreting the Code and its application to public services.
- Upholding the Code within their own sphere of influence, including monitoring and ensuring compliance.
- Managing violations, ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest related to the Code.



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