

# UNICEF UK INFOSHEET



## GUIDANCE ON PRODUCING EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS AND ONLINE MATERIALS FOR PARENTS ON BOTTLE / FORMULA FEEDING

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The Covid-19 pandemic has necessitated significant changes in the way that education and information for new parents are delivered by maternity and health visiting services. Many activities that were carried out face-to-face are being moved to a video or online platform for parents to access, e.g. antenatal education classes, hospital discharge information and sessions for parents in the postnatal period.

Whilst this has many benefits in terms of consistency of information and enabling flexibility of access, as with other materials, there is also the potential to undermine key Baby Friendly messages if the content is not developed carefully. This is particularly relevant to information relating to bottle / formula feeding, as it is important that this information is communicated sensitively and effectively without appearing to promote formula feeding or to inadvertently undermine breastfeeding. All such material must also be in line with the requirements of [the UK law](#) and [the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes](#).

Therefore, when developing or reviewing video or online material to be shared with parents, we ask that you ensure that it:

- adheres to the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and includes the UK legal requirements as outlined below
- contains no promotional material of any kind (such as showing easily identifiable or named brands of milk, bottles or teats)
- covers the [Baby Friendly standards](#) accurately and effectively, e.g. the content should reinforce and not contradict the standards
- does not imply that formula feeding is equitable with breastfeeding
- does not glamorize or idealise bottle feeding or imply that formula feeding is always problem-free
- is proportionate in the amount of content dedicated to breastfeeding, bottle feeding (including with expressed breastmilk) and formula feeding

When developing videos and other online materials, it is suggested that the content and wording of the [Unicef UK bottle feeding material for parents](#) be used as a guide. It is also very important to consider when the content will be viewed by parents.

Demonstrations on how to sterilise equipment and prepare infant formula should not be routinely shown to all parents in the antenatal and postnatal period, as this implies that

the information will be necessary for all parents. Rather, this should be routinely shown to parents who have already decided to formula feed in the early postnatal period.

### **Assessment**

Video and other online materials will be reviewed at assessment as part of the standard review of parent-facing documents, in the same way as written leaflets, content of classes, etc. All such material is expected to be accurate and effective and free of promotion for breastmilk substitutes, bottles, teats and dummies.

How and when the material is routinely used will also be reviewed to ensure that this is appropriate and likely to be effective.

Parents' views on the materials will be assessed as part of the questions they are asked about the information and education they have received.

## Legal requirements in the UK

All material dealing with infant feeding and intended for use by parents must adhere to the UK law and so it is important to bear this in mind when planning the content of your video. The requirements of the UK law are outlined below. To help you achieve this, we suggest making sure you include the requirements related to formula feeding in the main body of the video and include a disclaimer, such as the one below, to address those requirements specifically related to breastfeeding.

*Breastfeeding is the healthiest way to feed your baby. If you decide not to breastfeed or to stop breastfeeding, it is possible to restart. Giving infant formula to a breastfed baby will reduce your milk supply. You do not need to eat any special foods while breastfeeding, but it is a good idea for you, just like everyone else, to eat a healthy diet.*

The wording in the current [infant formula and follow-on formula regulations](#) (Article 11/2) is that:

*Informational and educational materials, whether written or audio-visual, dealing with the feeding of infants and intended to reach pregnant women and mothers of infants and young children, shall include clear information on all the following points:*

- a) the benefits and superiority of breastfeeding*
- b) maternal nutrition and the preparation for and maintenance of breastfeeding*
- c) the possible negative effect on breastfeeding of introducing partial bottle feeding*
- d) the difficulty of reversing the decision not to breastfeed*
- e) where needed, the proper use of infant formula.*

*Where such materials contain information about the use of infant formula, they shall include the social and financial implications of its use, the health hazards of inappropriate foods or feeding methods, and, in particular, the health hazards of improper use of infant formula. Such material shall not use any pictures which may idealise the use of infant formula.*