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Lactation rooms available for parents in need at Oakland University

In an ongoing effort to meet the changing needs of students, faculty and staff, Oakland University now offers three private lactation rooms for nursing mothers who are looking for a safe space on campus to pump or feed their child, whether it's by bottle or breast.

The rooms are located on the second floor of the Engineering Center, on the third floor of Pawley Hall, and on the fourth floor of the Human Health Building. Each room has been designed to provide a clean, secure and user-friendly environment for parents on campus.

“What we've done is create a dedicated space for those who are either looking to feed their babies, or who are in the process of nursing and need to pump,” said Leigh Settlemoir Dzwik, Ph.D., assistant dean of the School of Education and Human Services.

Located in room 355A adjacent to the vending machines on the third floor, the lactation room in Pawley Hall contains a comfortable chair, sink, table, lamp and mirror, as well as custom artwork on the walls. There are also plans to add a changing table in the future, Settlemoir Dzwik said.

“As a mother of two young children, I know how important a space like this is for parents on campus,” she said. “That's why, when we were designing it, we weren't just focusing on the mother's role. We focused on feeding children in any capacity, whether it's breastfeeding or bottle feeding, which anyone can do. We wanted to make the room open and available to any caregiver who needs it.”

The Pawley Hall lactation room is locked when not use, but a key can be obtained from the Educational Resources Lab (350), or the Dean's Office (415) in the event the ERL is closed.

“The ERL has taken the key and put it on a chain of very brightly colored children's building blocks, so if you lose the key, you'll be able to find it,” she said.

According to Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act, employers are required to provide a place, other than a bathroom, that is shielded from view and free from intrusion from coworkers and the public, which may be used by an employee to express breast milk.

“I think people are starting to realize how important a lactation room is,” Settlemoir Dzwik said. “One of our jobs at this institution is to reduce the roadblocks to academic success. With people who are trying to balance their responsibilities as a student and a parent find out we have this resource available on campus, it's a step in the right direction.”

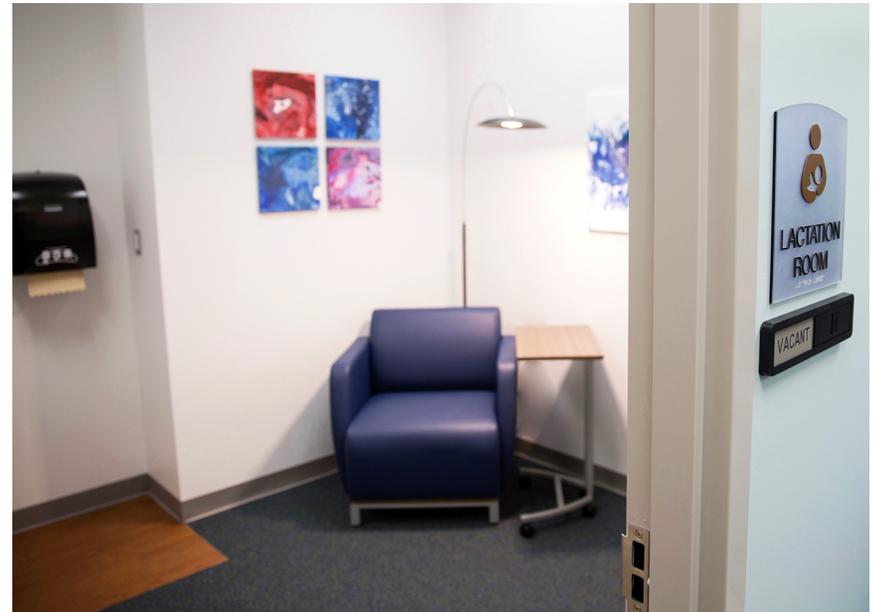
Additional lactation rooms are available in room 265B in the Engineering Center, and room 4080 on the fourth floor of the Human Health Building.

“Before starting graduate school one of my biggest concerns was how being away from my baby would affect my ability to breastfeed; I knew that I wanted to pump, but I wasn't sure I would manage it while in school,” said Marganit Rauch, a graduate student who has been utilizing the HHB lactation room while studying physical therapy at OU.

“Having the lactation room has made my life so much easier,” Rauch added. “I can go there whenever I need, and I never have to worry about finding a private place to pump, or worry about asking someone to find a room for me.”

According to Maria Ebner-Smith, M.B.A., assistant dean of Health Sciences, both the School of Nursing and the School of Health Sciences were approached by students and faculty in creating a lactation space and worked with the Capital Planning and Design Department to create a safe and inviting space.

“The School of Nursing and the School of Health Sciences are so excited to be able to support nursing mothers during their time here at Oakland University,” Ebner-Smith said. “We are hoping this allows nursing moms to feel comfortable here at OU while away from their children and helps students be able to continue their education and support their children at the



Oakland University now offers three private lactation rooms for nursing mothers who are looking for a safe space on campus to pump or feed their child.

The room holds two locked lactation spaces that are accessible to anyone for lactation purposes. Each room is equipped with comfortable seating, lighting, power and a moveable table. The open area of the room also has a mirror, sink and counter space.

“We had many requests in the fall for lactation space, and everyone was so glad when the rooms opened,” said Michele St. Denis, B.A., assistant dean of the School of Nursing. “We’re very pleased to see how quickly students and staff have taken to using the room, as the word spreads about its availability.”

According to Settlemoir Dzwik, Oakland University is one of the only colleges and/or universities in the area to provide dedicated lactation rooms for students, staff, faculty and visitors on campus.

“I was kind of surprised, but I’m very glad we’re able to provide this service at Oakland University,” she said. “I would love to see it expanded. For an institution of our size, I think there’s a lot of potential for additional locations.”

She’ll get her wish this fall, as a new lactation room is expected to open in the Oakland Center as part of the current expansion project.