



## Department of Shared Administrative Services Office of Personnel Management

**Policy Title:** Infant at Work Program

**Policy Number:** 73

**Effective Date:** TBD

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Arkansas State Government wants to support healthy bonding when a family has a new baby. Research shows that allowing a parent and infant to remain together in this earliest stage of life supports critical bonding, healthy infant brain development, parental wellbeing, and provides more opportunities for breastfeeding, all of which improves lifelong health for the infant. Arkansas State Government also wants to emphasize the importance of women in the workforce by providing additional options for families to have flexibility in not having to choose between staying home to be closer to their infant or returning to work.

The Infant at Work Program is established to provide a positive work environment that recognizes a parent's/legal guardian's responsibility to both their job and their infant by acknowledging that when a parent/legal guardian can stay with their infant, it benefits the family, the employer, and society. Through the Infant at Work Program, a state employee who has a newborn or who is a legal caregiver to an infant under six months of age may be able to bring his/her infant to work until the baby turns six months old.

Each department and agency shall develop policies to accommodate infants in the workplace where feasible and appropriate for the work environment. The policies shall include the application and approval process required for that department.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) will provide example policies to assist departments and agencies in developing their own policies. All policies must include, at a minimum, the following information:

- **Employee:** An individual occupying a regular or extra help position within the department.
- **Infant:** A child at least 4 weeks old up to six months old.
- The infant at work arrangement is valid through the end of the workweek in which the infant turns six months old.
- The employee must first discuss their request and work situation with their supervisor. The supervisor will consider the employee's job responsibilities and work performance in determining the appropriateness for the Infant at Work Program.
- Participation in the Infant at Work Program is a privilege, not a right. The employee must maintain acceptable work performance. If problems arise, the supervisor may terminate approval.
- An employee is responsible for the safety of the infant and will always remain with the infant. The department will not assume responsibility for any illness or injury an infant might sustain because of being at work or any work-related setting, or during transportation to and from work. It is the parent's responsibility to plan for their infant in the event of an emergency or evacuation.
- An employee shall not transport their infant in a state vehicle. An employee shall not take their infant to work if it involves any work-related travel or attending an off-site work-related conference.
- An employee shall not bring a sick infant to work.
- The department supports a breastfeeding-friendly environment and will ensure suitable areas are available for such purposes.
- The employee must provide all supplies and equipment needed to care for the infant and will ensure that the work area is kept in a clean and sanitary condition.