



## Private Lactation Space Healthy Community Initiative

In fall 2025, the Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) worked with Rice County Public Health's SHIP program to install a lactation pod at the Northfield Community College Collaborative (NCCC). This new space gives student parents, staff and visitors a private and comfortable place to nurse or pump breast milk.

NCCC offers many services like academic advising, class registration, financial aid and tutoring. These supports are especially important for student parents, who often face extra challenges. They may have less time, less money, trouble finding childcare or feel stressed about school. Studies show that 61% of women who go to community college after having a baby don't finish their education. NCCC wants to help change that.

The new lactation pod is one more way NCCC is helping student parents stay in school. Before the pod, there wasn't a private space to nurse or pump. Some students had to take time off after having a baby, which made it harder to come back. Now, parents can use the pod during class breaks and their children can stay in NCCC's free on-site childcare.

"This private, easy-to-use space has helped new moms stay in school while caring for their babies. It gives them a safe and comfortable place to nurse or pump, so they can keep working toward their degree," said Laura Hakala, NCCC Student Services Coordinator.

Breastfeeding has many benefits. For babies, it gives the best nutrition, helps their immune system and supports healthy growth. For moms, it helps the body heal, builds a strong bond with the baby and lowers the risk of health problems like diabetes and high blood pressure.

NCCC plans to keep supporting student parents and others in the community. The lactation pod is a long-term investment that will help students and families for years to come.

Have a project that SHIP might be interested in helping fund or want to know more about Public Health, health topics or local events? Contact Rice County Public Health at 507-332-6111.



The lactation pod in the Northfield Community College Collaborative allows students with young children a private space to nurse their children or pump breast milk.



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and the Minnesota Department of Health.*