



According to the United States Census, the number of children under the age of five living in Brooklyn is higher than the New York State average, and the size of households in Brooklyn surpasses the State average as well.

To support these young families, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams launched Family Friendly Brooklyn. This initiative builds on previous work to support families through the Safe Sleep Brooklyn Campaign, which was a partnership with Delta Cribs. 400 cribs and play yards were distributed to families in need, along with information for all Brooklynites on life-saving safe sleep tips, such as placing a baby on their back to sleep, having them sleep in a crib, and not using blankets or quilts which could suffocate newborns; Studies show that these habits can decrease the likelihood of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

## BREASTFEEDING EMPOWERMENT ZONE (BFEZ)

Borough President Eric L. Adams opened Borough Hall's Lactation Lounge in May of 2015. It is a comfortable, accessible, and clean space for mothers who are in Downtown Brooklyn to nurse or pump. The room has a hospital grade pump, recliners, a refrigerator for milk storage, and a changing table. The room is open for public use on business days during normal business hours.

When new mothers go back to work, they are put in an untenable position of discontinuing breastfeeding if employers have not created a private space for them to express milk through pumping, which is mandated by federal law. Also, some mothers may find breastfeeding challenging when they are in public. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), breastfeeding has been shown to reduce the likelihood of Type 2 diabetes, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), gastroenteritis, as well as ear and respiratory infections, amongst other diseases.

Breastfeeding rates in New York City remain below recommended levels and there are significant differences in breastfeeding rates across lines of race, poverty, and education. For example, breastfeeding rates are significantly lower in Brownsville, Bedford-Stuyvesant, and in other neighborhoods that are at or below the poverty line.

New York State Assembly Member Walter Mosley and New York City Councilman Robert Cornegy, Jr. also have dedicated spaces for the BFEZ. BFEZ is a NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene initiative to support breastfeeding.



**ERIC L. ADAMS**  
Brooklyn Borough President



**#BK Families**

## Recommendations

- Expand the BFEZ into each councilmanic district.
- Support legislation to ensure all New York City public buildings have a public lactation room.
- Support legislation to ensure all New York State public buildings have a public lactation room.
- Encourage OpenDataNYC to map each public lactation room location in New York City.
- Host information workshops on the benefits of breastfeeding for new mothers and babies as well as provide support information for new fathers.

## PAID FAMILY LEAVE

The United States is the only industrialized nation that does not have a national paid family leave law.<sup>iii</sup> According to the American Public Health Association (APHA), paid family leave brings significant benefits to young families, including decreased infant mortality rates, improved mental health for new mothers and longer periods of breastfeeding.<sup>iv</sup> In addition, paid family leave also benefit partners through increased involvement in their children's lives over the long term. While many employers like Ernst & Young or Google provide paid family leave, parents in lower wage jobs do not have access to similar benefits. Paid parental leave will assist in efforts to address these inequities and help all of Brooklyn's children start off on more equal footing.

A New York City Council resolution (Res 0615) in support of New York State's Paid Family Leave Act has been introduced by New York City Council Member Rory Lancman.

## Recommendations

- Passage and signage of the Paid Family Leave Act (A3870/S3004) by the New York State Legislature and Governor Andrew Cuomo, respectively.
- Enact paid family leave at the federal level.

## MATERNAL POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION SCREENING

Postpartum depression (PPD) and anxiety is the most common complication of pregnancy.<sup>v</sup> Up to 20 percent of women experience it<sup>vi</sup> and for half of them, the disorder begins in pregnancy. Unfortunately, many women are reluctant to seek help for this very treatable condition, either because they are embarrassed to be struggling or do not recognize that they could benefit from and deserve, professional support.<sup>viii</sup> Left untreated, PPD can develop into chronic depression for a mother<sup>ix</sup> and impair her child's cognitive and emotional development.<sup>x</sup> But with proper treatment, women can recover and begin to fully enjoy life with a new baby.

In 2014, Governor Cuomo signed into law a maternal depression screening bill, which provides much-needed support for women experiencing depression during pregnancy and the early postpartum period.<sup>xi</sup> The bill provides screening guidelines and referral resources to health care practitioners — such as OB/GYNs, midwives, and pediatricians — who encounter women in the first year after giving birth. It also provides a mechanism to inform state residents about both services aimed at understanding, identifying and treating maternal depression as well as educational services to de-stigmatize and promote awareness about maternal depression.

While passage of the bill was a key first step towards addressing maternal depression, the bill remains unfunded.

In partnership with the Seleni Institute, Brooklyn Borough President Eric L. Adams will be offering maternal depression screening trainings and referral workshops that directly implements the objectives of the maternal depression screening bill.

### **Recommendations**

- Provision of materials promoting awareness about maternal depression at City hospitals, in partnership with the Seleni Institute.
- Full funding of the maternal depression screening bill by Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.
- Allocation of City funding to conduct maternal depression screening trainings.

<sup>i</sup> State and County Facts, Kings County (2013), United States Census Bureau, available at: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/36047.html>.

<sup>ii</sup> AAP Expands Guidelines for Infant Sleep Safety and SIDS Risk Reduction, American Academy of Pediatrics (Oct. 18, 2011), available at: <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/news/Pages/AAP-Expands-Guidelines-for-Infant-Sleep-Safety-and-SIDS-Risk-Reduction.aspx>.

<sup>iii</sup> Tom Perez, U.S. Labor Secretary, Guess Who's Leading on Paid Leave? (Hint: Not Us), U.S. Department of Labor (Sept. 22, 2014), available at: <http://blog.dol.gov/2014/09/22/guess-whos-leading-on-paid-leave-hint-not-us/>.

<sup>iv</sup> Support for Paid Sick Leave and Family Leave Policies, American Public Health Association (Nov. 5, 2013), available at: <http://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2014/07/16/11/05/support-for-paid-sick-leave-and-family-leave-policies>.

<sup>v</sup> J. Toohey, Depression During Pregnancy and Postpartum, *Clin Obstet Gynecol*, 55(3), 788-97 (Sept. 2012), available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22828111>.

<sup>vi</sup> M.W. O'Hara and K.L. Wisner, Perinatal Mental Illness: Definition, Description and Aetiology, *Best Pract Res Clin Obstet Gynecol*, 28(1), 3-12 (Jan. 2014), available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24140480>.

<sup>vii</sup> L.H. Chaudron et al, Detection of Postpartum Depressive Symptoms by Screening at Well-Child Visits, *Pediatrics*, 113(3), 551-558 (Mar. 2004), available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14993549>.

<sup>viii</sup> E. Robertson et al, Antenatal Risk Factors for Postpartum Depression: A Synthesis of Recent Literature, *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 26(4), 289-95 (Jul. - Aug. 2004), available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15234824>.

<sup>ix</sup> N. Vliegen, S. Casalin, and P. Luyten, The Course of Postpartum Depression: A Review of Longitudinal Studies, *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 22(1), 1-22 (Jan. 2014), available at: [http://www.researchgate.net/publication/259645736\\_Vliegen\\_N\\_Casalin\\_S\\_Luyten\\_P\\_%282013%29\\_The\\_Course\\_of\\_Postpartum\\_Depression\\_A\\_Review\\_of\\_Longitudinal\\_Studies\\_Harvard\\_Review\\_of\\_Psychiatry\\_22%281%29\\_1-22](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/259645736_Vliegen_N_Casalin_S_Luyten_P_%282013%29_The_Course_of_Postpartum_Depression_A_Review_of_Longitudinal_Studies_Harvard_Review_of_Psychiatry_22%281%29_1-22).

<sup>x</sup> A. Poobalan et al, Effects of Treating Postnatal Depression on Mother–Infant Interaction and Child Development: Systematic Review, *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 191, 378-386 (Oct. 2007), available at: <http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/191/5/378>.

<sup>xi</sup> Governor Cuomo Signs Legislation to Provide Support for New Mothers and Families, The Office of New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo (Aug. 2014), available at: <http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-legislation-provide-support-new-mothers-and-families>.