

Florida Breastfeeding Coalition

Breastfeeding —the gold standard.

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April 18, 2009

SeaWorld Orlando
7007 SeaWorld Drive
Orlando, FL 32821

Dear SeaWorld Park Director:

I'm writing this letter on behalf of Tina CoyneSmith and all the breastfeeding mothers who may visit your park in the future. Tina CoyneSmith was visiting SeaWorld Orlando with her family on April 10, 2009. Ms. CoyneSmith was breastfeeding her 6-month-old baby in front of the baby care center at Shamu's Happy Harbor when a park employee asked her to stop feeding her baby.

All SeaWorld Park employees should be made aware of Florida Law, House Bill 231 (Fl. ALS 4; 1993 Fla. Laws ch. 4; 1993 Fla. HB 231 Fla. Stat. § 383.015, § 800.02 - 800.04, § 847.001 - later: § 827.071) that states in Section 1. *The breastfeeding of a baby is an important and basic act of nurture which must be encouraged in the interests of maternal and child health and family values. A mother may breastfeed her baby in any location, public or private, where the mother is otherwise authorized to be, irrespective of whether or not the nipple of the mother's breast is covered during or incidental to the breastfeeding.*

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the US Surgeon General recommend all infants be exclusively breastfeeding for 6 months and breastfeeding be continued for at least one year or as long as the mother and baby mutually desire. The many positive benefits of breastfeeding have been well documented in the medical literature and have been supported by the Department of Health and Human Services' *Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding* and the United States Breastfeeding Committee's *Breastfeeding in the United States: A National Agenda*.

Every citizen should encourage breastfeeding. The benefits of breastfeeding affect every part of our society. Breastfeeding reduces infant mortality and morbidity more than any other intervention, which translates into healthier children who have a greater chance to grow up as healthier adults. Breastfeeding is the most cost-effective way to decrease disease and save healthcare dollars. It would be appreciated if your park employees were better educated on the law regarding public breastfeeding in the State of Florida.

Sincerely,

Pat Lindsey, IBCLC, RLC

cc: Tina CoyneSmith