



Who's Who In Lactation?

**An Inventory of Breastfeeding Support:
From Confusion to Clarity**



United States Lactation Consultant Association
4410 Massachusetts Ave. NW, #406 | Washington, DC 20016
202.738.1125 | www.USLCA.org | info@USLCA.org



Who's Who In Lactation?

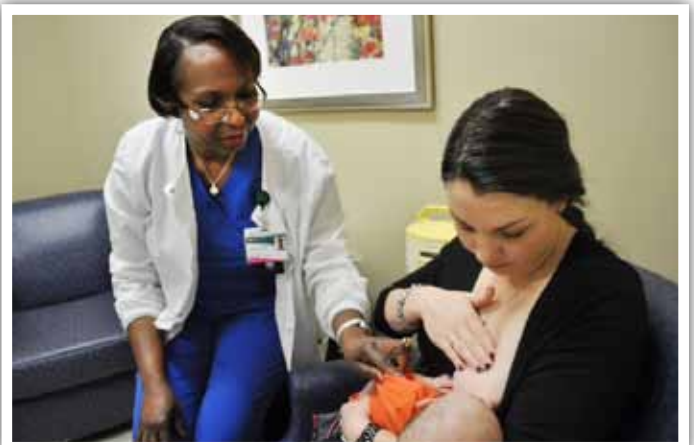
An Inventory of Breastfeeding Support: From Confusion to Clarity

Breastfeeding is a public health imperative. Promoting breastfeeding has increased breastfeeding rates, exclusivity, and duration. However, major barriers still exist for many women in spite of federal, state, and community efforts to support breastfeeding. Mothers often lack access to the support and guidance that they need to breastfeed for as long as they wish. There are numerous providers of lactation support services, all of whom are needed to maintain and improve breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity. Differing preparation, credentialing, and terminology of these providers is confusing to families, insurers, employers, hospitals, and policy makers. The use of terms such as “counselor,” “specialist,” “educator,” and “consultant” are often mistaken to mean the same thing.

There is ample peer-reviewed research confirming the effectiveness of care from an IBCLC.

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) have extensive and thorough training compared to the many breastfeeding supporters with other initials. IBCLCs are healthcare professionals trained to provide clinical expertise in the management of lactation from pregnancy through weaning. The IBCLC cares for basic and complex problems with lactation. There is ample peer-reviewed research confirming the effectiveness of care from an IBCLC. The hospital IBCLC works in maternity and pediatric care to provide clinical services and staff education. Outpatient lactation consultants work in medical practices, private practice and public health settings. Lactation consultants coordinate work place lactation services. Their expertise is used to develop and implement policies to support, protect, and promote breastfeeding for government or other healthcare agencies. An IBCLC might also carry out breastfeeding-related research.

Counselors, educators, and specialists usually have less training and handle basic problems while providing encouragement, emotional support, and promoting self-efficacy. They complete programs which typically do not require prior general healthcare education or clinical experience. These classes stand all-inclusive regardless of course length or depth of education and confer a certificate verifying completion of a course or passing a test on the course material.



Lactation-specific study required for the IBCLC certification is two to nine times more hours than educational programs require.

Individuals must meet predetermined criteria to be eligible to become an IBCLC:

- 90 hours of lactation-specific education, including ethics
- 8 college credit health professional courses
- 6 standard healthcare continuing education courses
- 300-1000 hours of clinical experience in lactation

Professional-level health education and clinical experience in lactation are not required for other types of certifications. The lactation-specific study is two to nine times more hours than other programs require. After meeting these criteria a person is qualified to take an examination from the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE). This examination is an assessment of knowledge and skills from an independent, credentialing-only body similar to state administered board exams of other health professions. The only purpose of IBLCE is to evaluate the knowledge of lactation consultants, thus avoiding any conflict of interest that could stem from programs that offer education and their own credential. An IBCLC must take the exam every 10 years and verify continuing education in the 5 year interim to maintain certification. IBLCE also sets practice standards, defines competencies, stipulates candidate eligibility requirements, delineates scope of practice, and oversees compliance with the Code of Professional Conduct.



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Surgeon General consider the IBCLC as integral to the quality of breastfeeding management.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Surgeon General consider the IBCLC as integral to the quality of breastfeeding management.

To help alleviate confusion concerning lactation support designations, Table 1 outlines differing lactation support provider preparation and qualifications. This information is up-to-date as of July 8, 2014, but is subject to change.

Table 1

TITLE	TRAINING TIME	SKILLS
International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)	Approximately 5 years, of preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90 hours lactation specific education • 8 college level health professional courses (24 academic credits) • 6 health related continuing education courses • 300-1000 clinical practice hours • Pass a criterion-reference exam <p>The International Board Certified Lactation Consultant possesses the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to provide quality breastfeeding assistance to babies and mothers. The IBCLC specializes in the clinical management of breastfeeding which includes: preventive healthcare, patient education, nutrition counseling, and therapeutic treatment. http://iblce.org/certify/eligibility-criteria/</p>
Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC)	45 hours	This comprehensive, evidence-based, breastfeeding management course includes practical skills, theoretical foundations and competency verification. Certification is accredited by the American National Standards Institute. www.healthychildren.cc/clc.htm
Certified Lactation Specialist/ Breastfeeding Specialist	45 hours	Designed for the aspiring lactation consultant or nurses, physicians, midwives, dieticians, breastfeeding assistants or others desirous of improving their knowledge base and skills in working with the breastfeeding dyad. This certification is a stepping stone to the IBCLC credential. www.lactationeducationconsultants.com/course_clsc.shtml
Lactation Educator Counselor	45 hours	This university based program trains participants to be Lactation Educator Counselors. Lactation Educator Counselors are typically entry level practitioners and deal primarily with the normal process of lactation. This course is the required prerequisite to the Lactation Consultant course. http://breastfeeding-education.com/home/clc-2/
Breastfeeding Counselor	10-14 months, Provide 30 hours of support	2-3 day workshop, self evaluation, one written paper & case studies, read and review 5 books, submit one survey on breastfeeding support available in their community, open book online tests (multiple choice) to cover physiology & anatomy. http://www.childbirthinternational.com/information/pack.htm
Breastfeeding Counselor	Approximately 9 months of self study	Breastfeeding Counselors (BCs) are accredited representatives of Breastfeeding USA who participate in mission-related activities in their communities, online, and with the national organization. A mother who has breastfed her baby for at least one year and fulfills the other personal experience requirements can become a BC by successfully completing the application and education program. Breastfeeding Counselors understand the significant role that mother-to-mother support plays in women's overall success and satisfaction with breastfeeding. Accordingly, their primary function is to offer evidence-based breastfeeding information and support to women through in-person meetings, by phone, or online as representatives of Breastfeeding USA. Other examples of mission-based services include providing administrative support to volunteers, participating in advocacy activities, and translating materials into other languages. www.breastfeedingusa.org
Lactation Educator Certification	120 hours online training, includes 50 hours health science 75 hours self-directed study/mentorship	Qualified to teach, support, and educate the public on breastfeeding and related issues and policies. Workbook activities, required reading materials, attend breastfeeding meetings, research paper, submit a class presentation, work for clients in their community. www.birtharts.com/lactation-educator-certification.htm
Community Breastfeeding Educator	20 hours	Does not issue Lactation Consultant status. For community workers in maternal child health, focuses on providing services to pregnant women to encourage the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding. www.healthychildren.cc/maternalinfant.htm/
Baby Friendly Curriculum	Approximately 20 hours	Used by facilities to strengthen the knowledge and skills of their staff towards successful implementation of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding. www.babyfriendlyusa.org/get-started
WIC Peer Counselor	30-50 hours, Varies by state, some states have quarterly training	Peer counselors are mothers who have personal experience with breastfeeding and are trained to provide basic breastfeeding information and support to other mothers with whom they share various characteristics, such as language, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. In WIC, peer counselors are recruited and hired from WIC's target population of low-income women and undergo training to provide mother-to-mother support in group settings and one-to-one counseling through telephone calls or visits in the home, clinic, or hospital. Refers mothers with challenging questions and concerns to an IBCLC. www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Learning_Center/support_peer.html
Certified Lactation Educator	20 hours total, some have 8 hours clinical	Qualified to teach, support, and educate the public on breastfeeding and related issues. Complete course training, attend support group meetings, observe consultation or videos, review research studies and other requirements, including a test. www.cappa.net/get-certified.php?lactation-educator
La Leche League Peer Counselor (volunteer)	18-20 hours	Have successfully breastfed their infants for 6 months. Program developed to provide support systems within targeted communities that will provide ongoing access to breastfeeding information and support. www.llli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvaugsep99p92.html
La Leche League Leader (volunteer)	Approximately 1 year of self-study training	An experienced breastfeeding mother, familiar with research and current findings dealing with breastfeeding, who offers practical information and encouragement to nursing mothers through monthly meetings and one-to-one help. www.lalecheleague.org/lad/tall/faq.html#howlong