

# Who's Who?

## A glance at breastfeeding support in the United States

Lactation support is often needed to help mothers initiate and continue breastfeeding. There are many kinds of help available for breastfeeding mothers including peer counselors, certified breastfeeding educators and counselors, and lactation professionals such as the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC®).

Breastfeeding support is valuable for a variety of reasons, from encouragement and emotional support to guidance and assistance with complex clinical situations. Mothers benefit from all kinds of support, and it is important to receive the right kind at the right time. The breastfeeding support categories listed below each play a vital role in providing care to mothers and babies.

Breastfeeding Support Types	Prerequisites	Training Required	Scope of Practice
<b>Professional</b> <i>(International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, IBCLC®)</i>	Recognized health professional or satisfactory completion of collegiate level health sciences coursework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 90 hours of lactation-specific education</li> <li>• College level health science courses</li> <li>• 300-1000 clinical practice hours</li> <li>• Successful completion of a criterion-referenced exam offered by an independent international board of examiners.</li> </ul>	Provide professional, evidence based, clinical lactation management; educate families, health professionals and others about human lactation.
<b>Certified</b> <i>(i.e. Certified Lactation Counselor, Certified Breastfeeding Educator, etc.)</i>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20-120 hours of classroom training</li> <li>• Pass a written exam offered by the training organization</li> </ul>	Provide education and guidance for families on basic breastfeeding issues.
<b>Peer</b> <i>(i.e. La Leche League, WIC Peer Counselor, etc.)</i>	Personal breastfeeding experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 18-50 hours of classroom training</li> </ul>	Provide breastfeeding information, encouragement, and support to those in their community.

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