



IBCLCs The Critical Difference.

Counselors usually have less training and handle basic problems while providing encouragement, giving emotional support, and promoting self-efficacy. Education and support for the normal course of breastfeeding including encouragement in the cultural context and emotional support are valuable sources of care for mothers.

However, counselors, educators, and specialists are educated through certificate programs which typically do not require prior medical knowledge, education, or clinical training but rather stand all-inclusive regardless of course length or depth of education. There is **no peer-reviewed research** evaluating the effectiveness of care from individuals who attend certificate programs as there for IBCLCs.

Ultimately, the concern rests in whether the certificate programs can objectively enforce unbiased disciplinary actions, create ongoing accountability measures for personal development, serve as their own regulatory body in which to monitor quality of evidence-based patient outcomes, and avoid any potential conflict of interest.

The IBCLC is the only certification that requires clinical experience in lactation as a pre-requisite to becoming certified. The IBCLC certification requires renewal through education or examination every 5 years. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Surgeon General consider IBCLCs as integral to the quality of breastfeeding management.

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Who's Who in Lactation?

IBCLCs Make the Difference.



USLCA
United States Lactation
Consultant Association



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An Inventory of Breastfeeding Support: From Confusion to Clarity

	<i>TITLE</i>	<i>TRAINING TIME</i>	<i>SKILLS</i>
<p>Increased attention to breastfeeding as a public health imperative has resulted in higher rates of initiation, exclusivity, and duration of breastfeeding. However, major barriers still exist for many women in spite of Federal, state, and community efforts to support breastfeeding. The demographics of breastfeeding show that mothers often lack access to support and guidance that they need to initiate and sustain breastfeeding for meaningful periods of time.</p> <p>There are numerous providers of lactation support services, all of whom are needed to improve breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity. Differing preparation, credentialing, and expertise of these providers can be confusing to the public, insurers, employers, hospitals, and policy makers. The widespread use of terms such as "counselor," "specialist," "educator," and "consultant" are often misused and mistaken to mean the same thing.</p> <p>In general, lactation <i>consultants</i> are paid, healthcare providers "trained" to provide specific clinical expertise in the management of lactation including complex problems. The lactation consultant holds the International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) certification and is prepared to work in any setting where breastfeeding support and care is needed. Additionally, their expertise is used to develop and implement policies to support, protect, and promote breastfeeding, educate other members of the healthcare team, and carry out breastfeeding-related research.</p> <p>Valued as the most trusted source for certifying lactation and breastfeeding clinicians, the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) is an <i>independent</i> accrediting body responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conferring the IBCLC credential • defining clinical competencies • Writing/administering the criterion-referenced exam • determining candidate eligibility • delineating scope of practice • overseeing Code of Professional Conduct compliance • presiding with an Ethics & Disciplinary Committee. <p>IBLCE requires prerequisites prior to administering the criterion-referenced examination. This examination is an assessment of knowledge and skills, which unlike certificate programs, is completely separate and independent of training or education further establishing the highest standards worldwide.</p> <p>Since the various lactation support designations can be confusing to the public, USLCA has taken an inventory of the differing lactation support provider preparation</p>	International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)	Usually around 5 years of preparation	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 and successfully pass a criterion-reference exam. The International Board Certified Lactation Consultant possesses the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to provide quality breastfeeding assistance to babies and mothers. IBCLCs specialize in the clinical management of breastfeeding which includes: preventive healthcare, patient education, nutrition counseling, and therapeutic treatment. http://iblce.org/certify/eligibility-criteria/
	Certified Lactation/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. http://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/clec-2/
	Breastfeeding Counselor	10-14 mo, provide 30 hrs 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 your community, open book online tests (multiple choice) to cover physiology & anatomy. http://www.childbirthinternational.com/information/pack.htm
	Breastfeeding Educator	1010 hours	Qualified to teach, support, and educate the public on breastfeeding and related issues and policies. Workbook activities, required reading materials, attend 8 breastfeeding meetings, research paper, submit a class presentation, work for clients in their community. Prepares for the IBCLC exam. http://www.birthearts.com/beccd.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." http://www.healthychildren.cc/maternalinfant.htm/
	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. http://www.healthychildren.cc/clc.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. http://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. Refer mothers to IBCLCs who have challenging questions and concerns. http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Learning_Center/support_peer.html
	Certified Lactation Educator (CLE)	20 hrs total, some have 8 hrs 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. http://www.cappa.net/get-certified.php?lactation-educator
	La Leche League Counselor	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. http://www.llli.org/llleaderweb/lv/lvaugsep99p92.html
	La Leche League Leader	Approximately 1 year of self-study	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. http://www.lalecheleague.org/lad/tall/faq.html.#howlong