

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants

The title International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) identifies a specialist in lactation management. IBCLCs are allied health professionals who have met eligibility requirements and have passed an independent, international examination. They are required to keep their knowledge and skills current, and must recertify every five years through continuing education or re-examination. Lactation consultants with the IBCLC designation have the one credential that is recognized by all national and international lactation consultant professional associations.

Among those who become IBCLCs are midwives, hospital and public health nurses, physicians, pediatricians, obstetricians, educators, dietitians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and experienced peer support counselors. Generally, they have spent several years and hundreds of hours of study acquiring the education and clinical experience which are the necessary pre-requisites for certification.

IBCLCs possess the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to provide quality breastfeeding support and management to mothers and babies with lactation-related problems. IBCLCs focus on preventive health care, and therefore support and encourage parents to be actively involved in decisions about their breastfeeding experience. They work collaboratively with other health professionals in determining the best approach to a lactation-related problem. IBCLCs protect and promote breastfeeding by advocating for a community culture that supports breastfeeding families. They are required to practice within a Code of Ethics.

IBCLCs are employed in a variety of settings:

- hospitals, including maternity and pediatric units
- neonatal intensive care units and special care nurseries
- lactation clinics, maternal and child health services, parenting centres
- private practice as a lactation consultant
- general medical practice, and pediatric and obstetric practices

Competency statements have been developed by the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBCLCE) which identify and summarize the special knowledge and skills included in the role of the IBCLC.

For more information, visit the websites listed below:

Canadian Lactation Consultant Association -
<http://www.ilca.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3520>

International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners -
<http://www.iblce.org/docs/misc%20docs/Competencies%20FINAL%20.pdf>