



Scope of Practice  
for  
International Board  
Certified Lactation Consultants  
(IBCLCs)

## **Scope of Practice for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs)**

International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) have demonstrated specialized knowledge and clinical expertise in breastfeeding and human lactation and are certified by the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE).

This Scope of Practice encompasses the activities for which IBCLCs are educated and in which they are authorized to engage. The aim of this Scope of Practice is to protect the public by ensuring that all IBCLCs provide safe, competent and evidence-based care. As this is an international credential, this Scope of Practice is applicable in any country or setting where IBCLCs practice.

**IBCLCs have the duty to uphold the standards of the IBCLC profession by:**

- working within the framework defined by the IBLCE Code of Ethics, the Clinical Competencies for IBCLC Practice, and the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA) Standards of Practice for IBCLCs
- integrating knowledge and evidence when providing care for breastfeeding families from the disciplines defined in the IBLCE Exam Blueprint
- working within the legal framework of the respective geopolitical regions or settings
- maintaining knowledge and skills through regular continuing education

### **IBCLCs have the duty to protect, promote and support breastfeeding by:**

- educating women, families, health professionals and the community about breastfeeding and human lactation
- facilitating the development of policies which protect, promote and support breastfeeding
- acting as an advocate for breastfeeding as the child-feeding norm
- providing holistic, evidence-based breastfeeding support and care, from preconception to weaning, for women and their families
- using principles of adult education when teaching clients, health care providers and others in the community
- complying with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly resolutions

### **IBCLCs have the duty to provide competent services for mothers and families by:**

- performing comprehensive maternal, child and feeding assessments related to lactation
- developing and implementing an individualized feeding plan in consultation with the mother
- providing evidence-based information regarding a mother's use, during lactation, of medications (over-the-counter and prescription), alcohol, tobacco and street drugs, and their potential impact on milk production and child safety
- providing evidence-based information regarding complementary therapies during lactation and their impact on a mother's milk production and the effect on her child
- integrating cultural, psychosocial and nutritional aspects of breastfeeding
- providing support and encouragement to enable mothers to successfully meet their breastfeeding goals
- using effective counseling skills when interacting with clients and other health care providers
- using the principles of family-centred care while maintaining a collaborative, supportive relationship with clients

**IBCLCs have the duty to report truthfully and fully to the mother and/or infant's primary health care provider and to the health care system by:**

- recording all relevant information concerning care provided and, where appropriate, retaining records for the time specified by the local jurisdiction

**IBCLCs have the duty to preserve client confidence by:**

- respecting the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of mothers and families

**IBCLCs have the duty to act with reasonable diligence by:**

- assisting families with decisions regarding the feeding of children by providing information that is evidence-based and free of conflict of interest
- providing follow-up services as required
- making necessary referrals to other health care providers and community support resources when necessary
- functioning and contributing as a member of the health care team to deliver coordinated services to women and families
- working collaboratively and interdependently with other members of the health care team
- reporting to IBLCE if they have been found guilty of any offence under the criminal code of their country or jurisdiction in which they work or is sanctioned by another profession
- reporting to IBLCE any other IBCLC who is functioning outside this Scope of Practice