



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

Preamble

An International Board Certified Lactation Consultant has specialised knowledge and expertise in human lactation.

As such the role incorporates:-

- Provision of holistic, evidence based lactation support and care to women and their families from preconception to the end of the lactation cycle.
- Education of women, families, health professionals and the community about breastfeeding and lactation.
- Advocacy for breastfeeding women and participation in the development of social, maternal and child care, and infant feeding policy affecting breastfeeding practices and breastfeeding women.

An IBCLC may work independently, or as part of a health care team within a health care system. An IBCLC works collaboratively with health care providers and other members of the health care team.

The Scope of Practice

IBCLCs are required to:-

- Work within the legal framework of the geopolitical region or setting where they practice, the ILCA *Standards of Practice* and the ethical framework of the IBLCE *Code of Ethics*.
- Work within the scope of practice and the competencies set out in the IBLCE *Clinical Competencies Checklist*.

IBCLCs are able to:-

- Provide information about the impact of social and infant feeding policy on breastfeeding and lactation.
- Differentiate between normal and abnormal breastfeeding situations.
- Perform a comprehensive lactation assessment of the woman and her infant.
- Develop and implement a lactation management or care plan.
- Provide follow up services when appropriate and required.
- Ensure appropriate referrals are made for all situations outside the defined area of competencies (unless these fall within the scope of an additional certification, registration or licensure the IBCLC holds) or outside the expertise of the individual IBCLC.
- Provide evidence based information regarding the mother's use of medications (over-the-counter and prescription) while lactating: impact on mother's milk supply.
- Provide evidence based information regarding alternative therapies while lactating: impact on mother's milk supply and the effect on her infant.
- Record and keep all relevant documentation of care provided for the time specified by the local jurisdiction.
- Respect the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of mothers and families.
- Communicate with health care providers as appropriate.

The following activities are outside the scope of practice of an IBCLC:

- Diagnosing or treating medical conditions.
- Giving medical advice or prescribing medical therapies (including but not limited to medications/drugs).
- Prescribing or recommending the use of alternative therapies.
- Contradicting or ignoring the advice of a client's health care provider.
- Performing surgery or instructing others in how to perform an invasive procedure.

These activities may fall within the scope of another certification, registration or licensure the IBCLC holds and under which he or she provides these services. In such situations the IBCLC must be clear under which certification, registration or licensure he or she is carrying out a procedure.