

The difference between Lactation Certifications

Lactation Support Provider (LSP) Descriptors

Category	Descriptions	Training	Credentials & Programs
Lactation Consultants	Referral to these health professionals is appropriate for the full range of breastfeeding care, particularly involving high acuity breastfeeding situations.	<p>90 didactic hours, and additional training requirements and exam for each title.</p> <p>Often work clinically as part of the healthcare team in both inpatient and outpatient settings; may also work in private practice.</p>	<p>International Board Certified Lactation Consultant® (IBCLC®)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health professionals or individuals with 14 college level health science courses In addition to 90 didactic hours, and 300 to 1000+ hours of clinical practice with breastfeeding families, depending on training pathway
			<p>Advanced Lactation Consultants (ALC®)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification as a CLC® or IBCLC® 2 college credits in Maternal and Infant Assessment 3 college credits in Advanced Issues in Lactation Practice
			<p>Advanced Nurse Lactation Consultants (ANLC®)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current RN license and certification as a CLC® or IBCLC® 3 college credits in Advanced Issues in Lactation Practice
Breastfeeding Counselors	Individuals who hold these certifications or similar have the skills to provide breastfeeding counseling, address normal breastfeeding in healthy term infants, and to conduct maternal and infant assessments of anatomy, latch, and positioning, while providing support.	<p>45-52 hours of classroom training and exam.</p> <p>Often provide support to families in the hospital and community settings. Counselors may have additional competencies to assist families with breastfeeding difficulties</p>	<p>Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC®)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 52 didactic hours and exam earning 3 college credits
			<p>Certified Breastfeeding Specialists (CBS®)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 didactic hours and exam earning 3 college credits
			<p>Certified Lactation Educators (CLE®)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 didactic hours and exam
Breastfeeding Peer Counselors	Breastfeeding peer support organizations equip these LSPs to meet the needs of the families they serve, focusing primarily on individual and community support.	<p>Personal breastfeeding experience and approximately 20 hours of training through various community models including La Leche League Leader program, which has 90 hours of training.</p>	<p>Peer support organizations equip these LSPs to meet the needs of the families they serve, focusing primarily on individual and community support. Examples of national breastfeeding peer counselor organizations in the U.S. include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breastfeeding USA HealthConnect One La Leche League (LLL) Reaching Our Sisters Everything (ROSE) Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
Lactation Educators	A Breastfeeding Educator is qualified to support and educate the public on breastfeeding and related issues but does not perform clinical care.	Generally 20 hours of training.	Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association (CAPP)

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Job Opportunities

IBCLC - Hospitals, clinics, physician's offices, Neonatal care units, milk banks, private practice

Lactation Counselors - Hospitals, medical groups, WIC programs, breastfeeding stores



Pathway to Lactation Educator

There are several course options for Lactation Educator certification. Below you will find a variety of options. This list is by no means exhaustive, but to provide you with an idea of the landscape of certification.

Certified Breastfeeding Specialist (LER)

Certified Breastfeeding Specialists (CBS) educate and support families through pregnancy, breastfeeding initiation, and the normal course of lactation. There are two steps to become a CBS:

- Completing your online coursework
- Passing the CBS exam (included in your course)

The educational credits you earn on your way to becoming a CBS can count towards becoming an IBCLC if you later choose to pursue IBCLC certification. The CBS is valid for five years and is renewable on or before its expiration.

The B.L.A.C.K Course

The B.L.A.C.K Course (Certified Black Activist Educator) is facilitating a 45 Hour Lactation Course for aspiring Black lactation professionals and Non-Black Allies supporting Black Communities. The Course will be taught virtually. It is a 5 day course. It does not meet on Saturday or Sunday. Register for the cohort that best meets your schedule.

Lactation Educator Counselor (UCSD)

CLEC is a comprehensive 45-hour course prepares health professionals and other interested individuals to become lactation counselors. It furnishes the basic information necessary to promote breastfeeding and to interact in the breastfeeding situation by assisting and encouraging the breastfeeding triad of mother, baby, and support person. Topics include basic anatomy and physiology of lactation, early attachment of the baby, hospital care, support during the postpartum stage, common concerns and solutions, and appliances and apparatuses used in breastfeeding. At completion of the course students are "Lactation Counselors". The lectures are recorded, so students don't need to log in at a specific time, however there are assignments and quizzes due weekly. The videos are four to six hours per week with reading and homework in addition.



Pathway to Lactation Educator

The Certified Lactation Counselor (ALPP)

Comprehensive Course Pathway - This Pathway is designed for the person looking to take a single, comprehensive, course that covers all the skills and competencies necessary for breastfeeding counseling and human lactation. Individuals who complete this Pathway must successfully complete a lactation course that is taught by one of our approved training partners. These courses meet the following requirements:

- 52 hours of training based on the WHO/UNICEF (World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund) Breastfeeding Counseling Training Course, that is worth a minimum of 3 college credits, and demonstrates the competencies and skills required to provide safe, evidence-based counseling for pregnant, lactating, and breastfeeding women, within the context of the course. Course completion documents must include verification of competencies.

For this pathway, candidates do not need to submit an application or any other forms to sit for the CLC exam; the application will be submitted directly from the training partner.

The Aggregate Pathway - You may take the ALPP Lactation Counselor Certification Exam if you provide documentation of the following:

- Proof that you are a currently licensed health professional (RN, APRN, physician, etc.) or hold a bachelor's degree or higher.
- Proof of completion of a minimum of 45 hours of education within the past year that relates directly to the WHO/UNICEF (World Health Organization/United Nations Children's Fund) Breastfeeding Counseling Training Course; may be collected from different courses (must submit the completed Academic Content Checklist).
- Proof of mastery of the skills and competencies necessary for breastfeeding counseling through directly supervised lactation care (submit the completed Counseling Skills Attestation).

The Alternate Pathway - To qualify to sit for the ALPP Certified Lactation Counsellor (CLC) exam in the alternate pathway, candidates must be a graduate of a Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) approved, post secondary, lactation consultant program.



Pathway to *Lactation Educator*

Military Lactation Counselor

MiLC® is a 53-hour lactation training course that leads to certification as a Military Lactation Counselor® (MiLC). With the MiLC course, you learn at your own pace with hybrid online modules and practical community-based assignments. In addition to learning the fundamentals of lactation support, you will improve your understanding of TRICARE breastfeeding benefits. The final component of the course includes an internship placement with flexible options to meet busy student needs.

MiLC is recognized by the Lactation Education Accreditation and Approval Review Committee (LEAARC) for 53 hours of lactation education. MiLC hours may be used to fulfill educational hours towards the 95 lactation education hours required to become an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC).



Pathways to IBCLC

There are 3 pathways to becoming an IBCLC, which are listed below. SDBFC Foundation has partnerships with UCSD and Lactation Education Resources for the 95 hour portion of lactation specific education. Each IBCLC scholarship recipient will choose to attend either the UCSD or LER IBCLC program.

Prior to applying for these pathways and the IBCLC exam, you are required to complete 14 health sciences subjects. You could have completed these subjects through other education programs such as undergraduate education or even high school! Check through your transcripts and verify if you have completed any coursework prior to registering for any subjects. Use the [Health Sciences Education Guide](#) to verify like-classes.

There are many options to complete the coursework. [San Diego City College](#) and [Grossmont College](#) are local options. [Lactation Education Resources \(LER\)](#) has also partnered with three organizations that offer eight of the required 14 courses. Find what works best for you!

Pathway 1

This pathway is for recognized health providers and recognized breastfeeding support counselors. They must currently be practicing. Counselors must be providing support through a recognized breastfeeding support counselor organization.

Requirements:

- Completed the 14 subjects from the Health Sciences Education Guide
- Minimum of 95 hours of lactation specific education, including five hours focused on communication skills, within the five years immediately prior to examination application. (UCSD or LER)
- Minimum of 1000 hours of lactation specific clinical practice in an appropriate supervised setting within the five years immediately prior to examination application.
- Clinical practice is to be obtained in an appropriate supervised setting, to include the following:
 - Hospital
 - Birth Center
 - Community Clinic
 - Lactation Care Clinic/Practice
 - Primary Care Practitioner's Practice/Office.
- Clinical practice hours can be earned through independent practice as a licensed/registered healthcare professional in non-healthcare settings.



Pathways to IBCLC

- For breastfeeding support counselors from a Recognised Breastfeeding Support Counselor Organization, clinical hours must be earned in a delivery setting which meets the following criteria:
 - Provide structured training programmes for their counselors which include comprehensive education in breastfeeding and lactation management
 - Have a Code of Ethics or Professional Conduct
 - Provide structured supervision for counselors, with an appropriate level of training
 - Provide a continuing education programme for counselors
- Adherence to, with attestation, the Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs.

Pathway 2

This pathway is for individuals that complete a comprehensive academic program in human lactation and breastfeeding that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) or another accrediting body with equivalent accreditation standards for lactation academic programs.

Requirements:

- Completed the 14 subjects from the Health Sciences Education Guide either as a prerequisite or completed concurrently to the lactation academic program
- Minimum of 95 hours of lactation specific education, including five hours focused on communication skills, within the five years immediately prior to examination application. (UCSD only)
- Minimum of 300 hours of directly supervised lactation specific clinical practice within the five years immediately prior to examination application. The IBCLC(s) providing the direct supervision must be currently certified IBCLCs in good standing.
- Adherence to, with attestation, the Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs.
- Pathway 2 IBCLC applicants must have completed the accredited lactation academic program within the five years immediately prior to their examination application.



Pathways to IBCLC

Pathway 3

Pathway 3 mentorship is a structured, defined relationship between an applicant and IBCLC(s) which must be pre approved. The mentorship must be developed according to the specifications found in the Pathway 3 Plan Guide, and the certification status of the IBCLCs serving as mentors must be verified by IBLCE prior to beginning the mentorship. All Pathway 3 Plans MUST be verified by IBLCE through an application process (which includes a fee) PRIOR to earning clinical hours for this Pathway.

Requirements:

- Completed the 14 subjects from the Health Sciences Education Guide
- Minimum of 95 hours of lactation specific education, including five hours of education focused on communication skills, within the five years immediately prior to examination application. (LER)
- Minimum of 500 hours of directly supervised lactation specific clinical practice as described in the Pathway 3 Plan Guide and obtained within the five years immediately prior to examination. The IBCLC(s) who provide the direct supervision must be currently certified IBCLCs in good standing.
- Adherence to, with attestation, the Code of Professional Conduct for IBCLCs.

IBCLC Recertification

IBCLCs are required to recertify every five years to maintain their credential.

Requirements:

- Basic Life Support Education
- 250 hours of practice in lactation consulting
- Choose between recertification by examination or by CERPs (75) with CE-Self Assessment



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