

# Standards of Practice for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants

## Preface

This is the third edition of *Standards of Practice for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants* (IBCLCs) published by the International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA).

All individuals practicing as a currently certified IBCLC should adhere to ILCA's *Standards of Practice* and the International Board of Lactation Consultant Examiners (IBLCE) *Code of Ethics for International Board Certified Lactation Consultants* in all interactions with clients, families and other health care professionals. ILCA recognizes the certification conferred by the IBLCE as the worldwide professional credential for lactation consultants.

Quality practice and service are the core responsibilities of a profession to the public. Standards of practice are stated measures or levels of quality that are models for the conduct and evaluation of practice. Standards of practice:

- promote consistency by encouraging a common systematic approach
- are sufficiently specific in content to guide daily practice
- provide a recommended framework for the development of policies and protocols, educational programs, and quality improvement efforts
- are intended for use in diverse practice settings and cultural contexts

## Standard 1. Professional Responsibilities

The IBCLC has a responsibility to maintain professional conduct and to practice in an ethical manner, accountable for professional actions and legal responsibilities.

- 1.1 Adhere to these ILCA *Standards of Practice* and the IBLCE *Code of Ethics*
- 1.2 Practice within the scope of the *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* and all subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions
- 1.3 Maintain an awareness of conflict of interest in all aspects of work, especially when profiting from the rental or sale of breastfeeding equipment and services
- 1.4 Act as an advocate for breastfeeding women, infants, and children
- 1.5 Assist the mother in maintaining a breastfeeding relationship with her child
- 1.6 Maintain and expand knowledge and skills for lactation consultant practice by participating in continuing education
- 1.7 Undertake periodic and systematic evaluation of one's clinical practice
- 1.8 Support and promote well-designed research in human lactation and breastfeeding, and base clinical practice, whenever possible, on such research

## Standard 2. Legal Considerations

The IBCLC is obligated to practice within the laws of the geopolitical region and setting in which she/he works. The IBCLC must practice with consideration for rights of privacy and with respect for matters of a confidential nature.

- 2.1 Work within the policies and procedures of the institution where employed, or if self-employed, have identifiable policies and procedures to follow
- 2.2 Clearly state applicable fees prior to providing care
- 2.3 Obtain informed consent from all clients prior to:
  - assessing or intervening
  - reporting relevant information to other health care professional(s)
  - taking photographs for any purpose
  - seeking publication of information associated with the consultation
- 2.4 Protect client confidentiality at all times
- 2.5 Maintain records according to legal and ethical practices within the work setting

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## Standard 3. Clinical Practice

The clinical practice of the IBCLC focuses on providing clinical lactation care and management. This is best accomplished by promoting optimal health, through collaboration and problem-solving with the client and other members of the health care team. The role of the IBCLC includes:

- assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation of care in a variety of situations
- anticipatory guidance and prevention of problems
- complete, accurate, and timely documentation of care
- communication and collaboration with other health care professionals

### 3.1 Assessment

- 3.1.1 Obtain and document an appropriate history of the breastfeeding mother and child
- 3.1.2 Systematically collect objective and subjective information
- 3.1.3 Discuss with the mother and document as appropriate all assessment information

### 3.2 Plan

- 3.2.1 Analyze assessment information to identify issues and/or problems
- 3.2.2 Develop a plan of care based on identified issues
- 3.2.3 Arrange for follow-up evaluation where indicated

### 3.3 Implementation

- 3.3.1 Implement the plan of care in a manner appropriate to the situation and acceptable to the mother
- 3.3.2 Utilize translators as needed
- 3.3.3 Exercise principles of optimal health, safety and universal precautions
- 3.3.4 Provide appropriate oral and written instructions and/or demonstration of interventions, procedures and techniques
- 3.3.5 Facilitate referral to other health care professionals, community services and support groups as needed
- 3.3.6 Use equipment appropriately:
  - refrain from unnecessary or excessive use
  - assure cleanliness and good operating condition
  - discuss the risks and benefits of recommended equipment including financial considerations
  - demonstrate the correct use and care of equipment
  - evaluate safety and effectiveness of use
- 3.3.7 Document and communicate to health care providers as appropriate:
  - assessment information
  - suggested interventions
  - instructions provided
  - evaluations of outcomes
  - modifications of the plan of care
  - follow-up strategies

### 3.4 Evaluation

- 3.4.1 Evaluate outcomes of planned interventions
- 3.4.2 Modify the care plan based on the evaluation of outcomes

## Standard 4. Breastfeeding Education and Counseling

Breastfeeding education and counseling are integral parts of the care provided by the IBCLC

- 4.1 Educate parents and families to encourage informed decision-making about infant and child feeding
- 4.2 Utilize a pragmatic problem-solving approach, sensitive to the learner's culture, questions and concerns
- 4.3 Provide anticipatory guidance (teaching) to:
  - promote optimal breastfeeding practices
  - minimize the potential for breastfeeding problems or complications
- 4.4 Provide positive feedback and emotional support for continued breastfeeding, especially in difficult or complicated circumstances
- 4.5 Share current evidence-based information and clinical skills in collaboration with other health care providers

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