

Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice

www.talpp.org

508 833-1500

Scope of Practice for the Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC)

Certified Lactation Counselors (CLCs) are individuals who have successfully completed the Healthy Children Project's *Certified Lactation Counselor Training Program*, an Accredited ANCC Nursing Skills Competency Program™* and are also certified by the Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice (ALPP).

CLCs have successfully completed a 45-hour training based upon the footprint of the World Health Organization/UNICEF Breastfeeding Counselling Training Course,¹ have successfully passed a criterion-referenced examination, and demonstrated the competencies and skills required to provide safe, evidence-based counseling for pregnant, lactating and breastfeeding women including the

- Ability to recognize one's own and others attitudes, values and expectations about infant feeding and healthy lifestyles.
- Ability to apply the concept of an individualized approach to counseling and management of breastfeeding.
- Ability to use appropriate, effective and sensitive communication skills.
- Ability to identify opportunities to offer information/education within the counseling encounter.
- Ability to assess physical and psychosocial aspects of the breastfeeding dyad.
- Ability to utilize reliable tools to assess affective/ineffective breastfeeding and milk transfer.
- Ability to incorporate evidence based approaches to practice and make appropriate referrals.
- Knowledge of programs, policies and legislation on state, national and international levels that promote, protect and support breastfeeding.

* The ANCC Accreditation Program and ANCC Accredited Organization are trademarks of the American Nurses Credentialing Center . All Rights Reserved.

¹WHO/UNICEF. *Breastfeeding counseling: a training course*. Geneva: WHO, 1993. Accessed at http://www.who.int/child_adolescent_health/documents/who_cdr_93_3/en/ on August 28, 2009

Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice

www.talpp.org

508 833-1500

According to the ANCC, the ANCC's Nursing Skills Competency Program addresses concerns regarding competency by validating that a skills program meets national design standards. It offers a national performance benchmark for selecting continuing education and skills training courses. Participants can validate and claim continued proficiency in their specialized skills. ALPP develops and administers the CLC examination to assess the knowledge and skills that underlie competent practice in lactation counseling. The development, administration and scoring of the CLC exam, after participants have met the skills competency requirements, promotes competency in lactation management, skills, and knowledge and thereby fulfills the mission of ALPP.

The purpose of the CLC certification is to protect the public by identifying individuals who are competent in lactation management skills and knowledge.

This scope of practice addresses the foundation activities that CLCs have the knowledge and skill to accomplish. Many individuals who hold the CLC credential have other licensure and education, including nurses, peer counselors, doulas, dietitians, nutritionists, physicians, midwives, occupational and speech therapy, mental health counselors, etc. Because of the diverse background and training of CLCs, this listing does not encompass activities that many CLCs may conduct under the umbrella of other licensure, training, or knowledge.

Knowledge and Competency of the CLC

The credentialed CLC has demonstrated the knowledge and skill to:

- Construct and maintain conditions that predispose mothers and babies to an uncomplicated breastfeeding experience through counseling, education and support.
- Monitor and evaluate behavioral, cultural and social conditions predisposing mothers and babies to an uncomplicated breastfeeding experience.
- Assess for, monitor and evaluate physical conditions that predispose mothers and babies to a complex breastfeeding experience.
- Monitor and evaluate behavioral, cultural and social conditions that predispose mothers and babies to complex breastfeeding experiences.
- Identify and advocate for aspects of breastfeeding management programs that facilitate optimal health outcomes.
- Assess breastfeeding using a multi-faceted approach.
- Use counseling skills and techniques that are supportive to breastfeeding mothers and babies.
- Identify and advocate for public health strategies that serve to protect breastfeeding.
- Coordinate care consistent with standards of professional ethics and behavior.

Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice

www.talpp.org

508 833-1500

Thus, the ALPP CLC has demonstrated readiness to:

- Promote breastfeeding as the optimal method of infant feeding and care.
- Counsel and educate pregnant women and mothers regarding breastfeeding.
- Conduct comprehensive assessment of mother and child related to breastfeeding
- Develop a care plan specific to the needs identified through assessment and counseling
- Assess the needs of women and babies who are at risk of, or currently experiencing lactation difficulties, providing care and triaging referral to other care providers as needed