



CAPPA Certified Lactation Educator Scope of Practice

The CAPPA Certified Lactation Educator™, CLE®

CAPPA Lactation Educators fill an important role in educating, counseling, and supporting families and the community by providing evidence based information about lactation and breastfeeding.

How CAPPA Lactation Educators work with families

Lactation Educators work with families from preconception through the stage of weaning offering education, encouragement, counseling, an experienced point of view, and fostering confidence, and a commitment to breastfeeding. Lactation Educators can be found working in a variety of settings to offer their services to families. Families can find them working as public health educators, WIC peer counselors, hospital/community educators, pediatric support professionals, and in private practice as educators.

How CAPPA Lactation Educators work within the healthcare system

Lactation educators are educators and counselors, not clinicians. Therefore Lactation Educators work within the healthcare system by offering appropriate referrals when their observance or counseling uncovers situations that require health care attention or support.

Clinical Limitations of CAPPA Lactation Educators

CAPPA does not issue Certified Lactation Consultant status, nor does the Lactation Educator course qualify one to dispense medical advice, diagnose, or prescribe medication. Lactation Educators do not offer information that directs families to act against medical advice.

CAPPA Standards

CAPPA Lactation Educators work within CAPPA's standards of practice to uphold the following (available to read as individual documents): code of conduct, a grievance policy, mission statement, vision statement, organization philosophy, and social media policy. CAPPA Lactation educators use current evidence based information in their practice. They maintain their



knowledge and skills through continuing education. They work within the legal framework of their individual community and region.

CAPPA Certified Lactation Educators™:

- Offer non-biased focused information, support, encouragement, guidance, referrals, and education to their communities, which includes families and professionals
- Provide culturally sensitive and adult based education
- Refer to healthcare professionals when support requires clinical assessment, need for prescription, or medical diagnosis
- Help families understand their rights according to current healthcare policy and legal statues
- Advise parents on how to maintain lactation when they are separated from their infant, which includes information on hand expression and the usage of breast pumps
- Offer continual support for families during the weaning process and beyond as it pertains to breastfeeding
- Educate, support and offer referrals to mothers who need to supplement or find that breastfeeding must be halted due to medical and/or personal reasons

The CAPPA Lactation Educator is not a clinician and therefore does not:

- Take a medical history or take medical notes on their clients.
- Provide clinical written histories to healthcare workers (as they do not take clinical notes)
- Give clinical assessment of the mother's breasts, the baby's mouth, or the dyad's dysfunctional latch
- Use pre and post lacteal weight checks for assessment
- Prescribe the use of medical devices including but not limited to nipple shields, supplemental nursing systems, and topical ointments

The CAPPA Community Lactation Educator, LE(C)

CAPPA Community Lactation Educators fill an important function in educating and supporting families interested in learning about feeding and parenting methods. This education may take place in the public, hospital, clinical or private setting. Community Lactation Educators provide informational, emotional and practical support of breastfeeding. They may provide this service



exclusively as Lactation Educators, or may use their training to augment their support in other professions, in the cases of doulas, childbirth educators, nurses, dieticians, and postnatal or parenting educators. In addition to providing breastfeeding information, Lactation Educators offer encouragement, companionship, an experienced point of view, and foster confidence and a commitment to breastfeeding. Breastfeeding education is not restricted to new families, but

applies to the general public and medical staff as well. Due to the limited breastfeeding information given in standard medical and nursing training, and the rampant misinformation about breastfeeding that is so prevalent today, the CAPPA Certified Community Lactation Educator serves as a resource for accurate, evidence-based information to the public and health care providers, as well as to childbearing families.

This program is distinct and separate from the CLE® program. While both the LE(C) and the CLE® provide families with support and education, **the LE(C) is not qualified to lead group classes or facilitate a breastfeeding class. They are trained breastfeeding professionals that offer one on one breastfeeding support and education. The LE(C) can however facilitate a breastfeeding support group for mothers.** The LE(C) also does not offer medical advice or provide lactation consulting or breastfeeding assessment. The LE(C) does receive extensive training in proper referral for families needing breastfeeding intervention. This program does not issue Lactation Consultant status, and does not qualify one to issue medical advice, diagnose medical conditions for mother or baby, or to prescribe treatment or medication. Currently, CAPPA LE(C)s can work in many fields providing support and advocacy for families across the United States and internationally. CAPPA LE(C)s can be found as WIC peer counselors, as educators on hospital postpartum floors, working as breast pump rental technicians and in breastfeeding support stores, and working in public health departments - just to name a few. Many of our CAPPA LE(C)s also use this certification to round out their labor and postpartum doula services and knowledge to ensure they are providing the highest quality services for breastfeeding support.