2025 Job Task Analysis

Executive Summary

The Academy of Lactation Policy and Practice (ALPP) is a non-profit organization that provides a national certification program in breastfeeding and human lactation for nurses, physicians, dietitians, WIC personnel, peer counselors, speech and language pathologist, dentists, doulas, independent lactation counselors and others. The ALPP Advisory Commission understands that a certification program is more than designing and administering an examination; it is the role of a certification program to assure quality, competence and compliance within the role of lactation counseling. The Academy of Lactation Policy and practice issues certification based on explicit clinical skills and requirements, and abides by the guidelines set forth by the ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB). ANAB has accredited the Certified Lactation Counselor® (CLC®) certification program and has affirmed that it meets the general requirements and those set forth in ISO/IEC 17024:2012. A certification program that is accredited by ANAB maintains external endorsement of excellency in their operations and procedures. There are currently more than 20,000 CLCs in practice.

Summary: Methodology

Through scientific inquiry, a Job Task Analysis (JTA) provides a formal process to assess a specific body of knowledge of professionals in a field, forming an understanding of the knowledge and skills necessary for competent practice. This study also forms the underpinning of the ALPP CLC examination blueprint. ALPP conducts a JTA every 5 years, with the initial JTA conducted in 2005. The Examination Development Panel ("EDP") met four times throughout the Winter and Spring of 2025. The panel held their initial meeting on March 21, 2025. The goals of the initial meeting were to review the scope of practice of the CLC, review the 2020 Job Task Analysis and to identify evidenced-based literature through which tasks and knowledge areas that reflect the role of the CLC are clearly defined. The 2025 survey instrument was based on previous Job Task Analyses and Role Delineation studies conducted by ALPP, the WHO/UNICEF Breastfeeding Counseling training course, the World Breastfeeding Trends

Initiative (WBTi) education checklist, and a 2024 Scoping Review examining the reasons why women discontinue exclusive breastfeeding.[1,2,3]

Subsequent meetings of the EDP were held on April 15, May 15, and May 21, 2025.

A rating scale of frequency of skill application (Table 1) was used to assess skills of CLCs who are practicing (Table 1). A rating scale of frequency was used to assess time spent by CLCs providing care in each chronological period (Table 2).

Table 1. Rating Scale: Frequency scale used for skill application

Please indicate how often you demonstrate the following skills in your role as a CLC:
I always use this skill
I use this skill some of the time
I rarely use this skill
I never use this skill
I do not use this skill because it is not a part of my current work position

Table 2. Rating Scale: Frequency scale used for chronological periods

Please indicate how often you work with families in the following periods of time:
I work with families in this time period most days
I work with families in this time period a few times per month
I work with families in this time period rarely
I never work with families in this time period
I do not work with families in these time periods as it is not a part of my current work position

The survey was sent via email to all current CLCs on June 2, 2025. The survey closed on September 16, 2025 and reminder emails were disseminated in between those dates. ALPP sent this survey to 21,284 individuals via its email communication system. Only one response per recipient was permitted based on IP address of the respondent. 3,618 individuals responded to the survey. The overall response rate was 16.9%.

[1] World Health Organization, UNICEF. Breastfeeding counselling: A training course. 1993. Available from: https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-CDR-93.3-5

[2] World Breastfeeding Trends Initiative (WBTi). *Assessment Tool, Version 4.* Revised March 2024. Available from: https://www.worldbreastfeedingtrends.org/uploads/resources/document/wbti-tool-version-march-2024.pdf

[3] Olalere, O., Harley, C. Why women discontinue exclusive breastfeeding: a scoping review. *British Journal of Midwifery.* December 2024, Vol 32, No 12. DOI: 10.12968/bjom.2024.0044

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Summary: Demographic Data (abbreviated)

Gender Identity	% Responses	# Responses
Female	97.95%	3,544
Male	0.41%	15
Transgender	0.08%	3
Gender Variant/Non-conforming	0.36%	13
Prefer not to respond	1.02%	37
Other	0.17%	6
N	**100%**	**3,618**

Race/Ethnicity	% Responses	# Responses
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.08%	39
Asian	3.01%	109
Black or African American	8.40%	304
Hispanic/Latinx	7.77%	281
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.22%	8
White or Caucasian	74.41%	2,692
I choose not to respond	2.85%	103
Other	1.85%	67
N	**100%**	**3,618**

Age (range)	% Responses	# Responses
18-24 years	0.44%	16
25-34 years	23.36%	845
35-44 years	35.43%	1,282
45-54 years	22.33%	808
55-64 years	14.93%	540
65+ years	3.51%	127
N	**100%**	**3,618**

Educational Degree	% Responses	# Responses
Less than high school degree	0.03%	1
High school degree or equivalent (GED)	7.19%	260
Associate's degree	13.49%	488
Bachelor's degree	47.07%	1,703
Master's degree	27.14%	982
Doctoral degree (PhD or other doctorate)	5.09%	184

N	**100%**	**3,618**

*This question was not required to complete the survey and was skipped by 1,309 individuals.

Credentials ±	**% Responses**	**# Responses**
Registered Nurse (RN)	43.12%	1,560
Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)	1.69%	61
Medical Doctor (MD)	1.22%	44
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO)	0.33%	12
Physical Therapist (PT)	0.47%	17
Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)	5.53%	200
Occupational Therapist (OT)	2.49%	90
International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC)	5.00%	181
Physician's Assistant (PA)	0.55%	20
Other	26.31%	952

± Select all that apply

Workplace Setting	**% Responses**	**# Responses**
Hospital – Labor & Delivery	21.70%	501
Hospital – Postpartum	23.17%	535
Hospital – NICU	13.90%	321
Hospital – Other unit	7.45%	172
Birth Center	3.68%	85
Family Outpatient Office/Clinic	6.50%	150
OB-GYN Office/Clinic	4.68%	108
WIC Office	17.11%	395
Pediatric Office/Clinic	11.13%	257
Private Practice	14.47%	334
Health Department	10.61%	245
Military Healthcare	1.08%	25
Community Health Center	3.25%	75
Community Support Groups	4.76%	110
Home Visiting Program (e.g. Nurse Family Partnerships, etc.)	14.21%	328
Head Start/Early Intervention/Healthy Start	3.03%	70
Other	10.39%	240
N	**100%**	**2,309**

*This question was not required to complete the survey and was skipped by 1,309 individuals.

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Topics Areas and Chronological Periods

Compilation of topic areas indicated that the nine parameters described by the Subject Matter Experts Panel after reviewing the WHO/UNICEF documents and the prior task analysis were validated by the 2025 job analysis.

<u>The following counseling parameters* were reported by lactation counselors:</u>

A. long term breastfeeding

B. maternal and infant nutrition

C. nipple and breast problems

D. latch-on and positioning for breastfeeding

E. milk supply, formula, supplementation

F. managements techniques including commercial products (pumps, feeders etc.) and their use

G. promotion of breastfeeding

H. weaning

I. special circumstances, maternal and infant

**Each parameter was described in further detail with examples for clarity*

<u>Lactation counseling took place in nine discrete chronological periods:</u>

1. Prenatal

2. Labor/birth/1-2 days

3. Prematurity

4. 3-14 days

5. 15-28 days

6. 1-3 months

7. 4-6 months

8. 7-12 months

9. Beyond 12 months

Summary: Results

CLCs are providing clinical care directly to families in their day-to-day work. As reported:

- 77.74% and 18.93% of CLCs stated that they *always use* or *sometimes* use, respectively, their skills to assess and correct positioning and attachment of baby; to assess effective milk removal; to assess signs of adequate intake; and to recommend changes if necessary. Over 96% of CLCs who completed this survey frequently apply their skills and knowledge to facilitate breastfeeding for the families they work with.
- 47.73% of CLCs stated that they *always use* their skills to take a comprehensive maternal and infant feeding history and 29.93% of CLCs stated that they use those skills some of the time. Together, 77.6% of CLCs who completed this survey frequently take a comprehensive maternal and infant feeding history.
- 51.71% of CLCs stated that they *always use* their skills to help families with lactation-related challenges, such as breastfeeding-related pain, inadequate latch, Raynaud's disease, nipple injuries, engorgement, mastitis, yeast and/or thrush. 35.12% of CLCs reported using these skills some of the time. 86.83% of CLCs who completed this survey frequently use their skills to address lactation-related challenges, skills beyond "uncomplicated" breastfeeding situations.

Results from this survey also demonstrate how CLCs are using their knowledge and skills to assist families with transitions back to work and how to nurse using other devices and methods.

- 54.87% of CLCs reported *always using* their skills to assess and counsel a mother to sustain lactation when returning to work or school via pumping strategies, hand expression, proper storage of breastmilk, and how to use breast pumps. Over 33% of CLCs reported using those skills *some of the time.* 87.9% of CLCs frequently use their knowledge and skills to assist families to sustain lactation through a variety of methods.

- Approximately 50% of CLCs reported either *always or sometimes* seeking training on the proper usage of commercial products, such as breast pumps, and reporting problems or injuries with commercial products, such as breast pumps, to the appropriate entities.

Additionally, a separate analysis investigated CLCs who work in private practice.

- 86.85% of CLCs who work in private practice reported *always using* their skill to help mothers successfully breastfeed through adjusting positioning and attachment, assessing transfer and removal of milk, and understanding and recognizing inadequate intake. 12.75% of this subgroup reported using the same skills *some of the time.* Results from this survey demonstrate that 99.6% of CLCs who work in private practice without any additional licenses or certifications utilize these clinical skills frequently when working with families.
- 65.74% of CLCs who work in private practice reported *always using* their skill to take a comprehensive maternal and infant feeding history. 26.69% of this subgroup reported using this skill *some of the time*. Results from this survey demonstrate that 92.4% of CLCs who work in private practice without any additional licenses or certifications often take comprehensive maternal and feeding histories when working with families.
- 65.34% of CLCs who work in private practice reported *always using* their skill to assess and counsel mothers about lactation-related challenges (i.e. breastfeeding-related pain; inadequate latch; Raynaud's disease; nipple injuries; piercings; engorgement; mastitis; yeast/thrush; ineffective positioning). 27.09 % of this subgroup reported using that skill *some of the time*. Results from this survey demonstrate that 92.4% of CLCs who work in private practice without any additional licenses or certifications often address lactation-related challenges with families they see.
- 82.87% of this subgroup reported *always using* their skills to recognize the signs and symptoms of maternal and infant problems necessitating referral to other health care professionals.

Next Steps

The changes in the test blueprint will be effective in the Spring of 2026. The ALPP CLC Advisory Commission thanks all of the CLCs and volunteers who helped with the 2025 Job Task Analysis. The next analysis is planned for 2030.

The full 2025 Job Task Analysis, with expanded data and results, is available upon request. Please email **info@alpp.org.**