
Subject: Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Scope of Practice

Effective Date: October 1, 2019**Revised Date:** August 1, 2021

Policy: BFPCs provide an important adjunct to the usual WIC program services. The BFPCs supplement the work of CPAs and lactation professionals. BFPCs that counsel and build relationships with moms beginning in the early prenatal period can effectively encourage mothers to choose to breastfeed and support them throughout their journey.

BFPC scope of practice is to provide basic information, support, modeling, and encouragement to new moms; and to make referrals. BFPCs will yield and refer when a breastfeeding dyad experiences complications beyond what basic breastfeeding information can address.

Reference: USDA Food and Nutrition Service, *WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum, 2020*; USDA/FNS Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance; USDA/FNS WIC Nutrition Services Standards

Procedure:

1. Provide anticipatory guidance on what to expect (e.g., growth spurts, hunger and satiety cues, and signs that baby is getting enough)
2. During pregnancy
 - a. Connect mothers to other health programs and services that can help during pregnancy and beyond
 - b. Provide prenatal breastfeeding promotion and support messages timed to mothers when they need it most
 - c. Help explore a mother's barriers to breastfeeding that may change as her pregnancy unfolds
 - d. Help mothers explore options for maximizing the benefits of breastfeeding and lowering the mother's barriers
 - e. Educate mothers about basic breastfeeding techniques, how to get a good start with breastfeeding in the hospital, and tips for good milk production
 - f. Make referrals as needed
3. During the first postpartum days
 - a. Make phone calls and visits to the hospital to address early concerns
 - b. Contact mothers in the early days home from the hospital
 - c. Assist mothers with positioning and latch
 - d. Home visits to assess breastfeeding if applicable
 - e. Contact within 24 hours if mothers experience problems
 - f. Yield to DBE if a situation occurs outside of this scope of practice
4. During the first postpartum month
 - a. Offer ongoing help and support throughout the critical first month when milk production is being established and mothers are adjusting to the demands of mother and breastfeeding
 - b. Promote the WIC food packages for fully breastfeeding mothers and to answer their many questions
 - c. Help mothers gain confidence in their milk production and encourage them if they

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- do not have friends or family members who support them
- d. Make weekly phone calls after breastfeeding is going smoothly
 - e. Contact within 24 hours if mothers experience problems
 - f. Yield to DBE if a situation occurs outside of this scope of practice
5. After the first month
- a. Help answer questions concerning baby's growth
 - b. Assist with pre-baby routines such as returning to work or school
 - c. Continue to offer ongoing help and support
 - d. Offer breast pumps and strategies for combining work or school with breastfeeding
 - e. Returning to work:
 - i. Contact the mother around 1-2 weeks before she plans to return to work/school
 - ii. Contact the mother a day or two after she returns to work or school
 - f. Help mothers deal with common challenges (i.e., breastfeeding in public)
 - g. Promote the WIC food packages
 - h. Make referrals to needed services
 - i. Connect mothers to other mothers in the community
 - j. Contact monthly if things are going well.
 - k. Provide ongoing support as baby grows to help mom's confidence
 - l. Contact within 24 hours if mothers experience problems
 - m. Yield to DBE if a situation occurs outside of this scope of practice