MSUE BREASTFEEDING INITIATIVE PEER

General Description

The Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) peer provides clients with mother-to-mother encouragement and support for breastfeeding via telephone or personal visit at the WIC clinic, hospital, or the client’s home. Counselors must successfully complete the following training requirements:

- Breastfeeding Basics and follow-up training
- Two initial field visits with experienced breastfeeding peers
- On-site visit by State WIC or MSUE Lactation Consultant
- Quarterly update trainings
- WIC annual conference
- EFNEP/Eating Right is Basic online nutrition training series

The peer receives technical support and mentoring from the State/Local Agency Lactation Consultants/Educator or Breastfeeding Coordinator.

Peers also receive additional trainings on The Infant Feeding Series (TIFS), home visiting and immunization curriculums. Peers are encouraged to attend a local La Leche League meeting.

Examples of Work in Nutrition Services

- Establishes effective working relationships with local WIC clinic as agreed upon by the local WIC agency and Extension.
- Encourages pregnant women to breastfeed.
- Enrolls mothers into the BFI program and encourages those who are eligible to apply for WIC, Food Stamps and Medicaid.
- Provides on-going breastfeeding support and information on a one-to-one basis.
- Teaches breastfeeding classes.
- Teaches ERIB or TIFS at mother’s request, or refers on to other EFNEP or Food Nutrition Program (FNP) nutrition instructor.
- Refers clients to other resources:
- Breastfeeding support services within the community
- Makes immediate referral to health professionals or additional agencies when needed.
- Communicates needs and problems related to breastfeeding to the Local Agency WIC Breastfeeding Specialist or State WIC Lactation Consultant. Communicates needs and concerns related to caseload management or referrals to MSUE Supervisor.
- Wear pagers to be accessible at critical periods when mothers may experience difficulties.
- Provide a link to services beyond the usual clinic hours, as there is little support and help available from the usual health systems outside working hours.
Recommended Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

- Enthusiastic about her personal breastfeeding experience.
- Successful completion of BFI, nutrition and other applicable trainings.
- Ability to relate to and communicate with clients about breastfeeding.
- Ability to assist mothers in positioning infant at breast.
- Knowledge of ways to recognize effective feeding at breast.
- Ability to maintain strict client confidentiality.
- Request assistance from WIC, MSUE Supervisor, or Lactation Consultant when unsure how to proceed with client(s).

Qualifications

A high school graduate or equivalent, who has some experience working with the public in a service providing setting. It is essential that the individual has some training or experience in health, nutrition, breastfeeding, education or other related areas.

The breastfeeding and nutrition education work of this paraprofessional must be closely monitored by MSUE Supervisor, Lactation Consultant/Educator, or a Local WIC Agency Breastfeeding Coordinator.