



Accreditation Policies and Procedures

Accreditation Overview

Lamaze International accredits Childbirth Educator Programs to prepare and mentor childbirth educators who will advance the mission and fundamentals of the organization. The Lamaze Accreditation Council has been established as an independent decision-making body to:

- Set standards, guidelines and policy for the accreditation of Lamaze Childbirth Educator Programs and to recognize those programs which meet or exceed the established standards;
- Grant formal approval to childbirth educator programs that contribute in part to the preparation of students who wish to enter the childbirth education profession, through a process of peer review;
- Establish, maintain and promote communication with the Lamaze Education and Certification Councils, approved and accredited programs, programs seeking approval or accreditation, students enrolled in childbirth educator programs, prospective students seeking quality programs and organizations providing credentialing services for graduates of childbirth educator programs.

The Accreditation Council is committed to ensuring the integrity of the accreditation process through the systematic, evidence-based evaluation of application materials submitted by qualified applicants.

The Lamaze Accreditation Process contributes to improving healthcare outcomes by providing a voluntary peer-review process that defines standards for high performance in providing quality training and measures compliance with those standards for organizations that elect to apply for accreditation.

All Council policy decisions must be consistent with policies, budgetary and fiscal considerations established by the Board of Directors, and the philosophy, mission and goals of Lamaze International.

Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs

A Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program offers training in the form of a Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar, and also may provide additional training and mentoring services. Successful completion of a Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar fulfills one component of eligibility for the Lamaze International Certification Exam, which evaluates a candidate's ability to meet the [Lamaze Childbirth Educator Competencies](#). The [eligibility requirements](#) for the Lamaze International Certification Exam are established by the Certification Council. The Lamaze International Certification Program is the only childbirth education certification program accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

Lamaze International is also a provider approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing provides continuing nursing education credits (contact hours) for Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminars.

Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar

The purpose of the Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar is to enable the learner to develop the knowledge and skills to plan, facilitate, and evaluate a childbirth education program based on the Lamaze mission and fundamentals and the [Six Healthy Birth Practices](#). All seminars must prepare students to meet the Lamaze Childbirth Educator Learning Outcome and Seminar Objectives, and must be developed according to the Lamaze Continuing Education Development Process*. Each seminar must include a minimum of 20 hours of educational content.

In order to successfully complete a Childbirth Educator Seminar, participants must attend the entire seminar and complete and submit an evaluation that assesses how well they feel prepared to meet the objectives of the seminar. Criteria for completing the comprehensive course of study for a Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program may vary from program to program.

The seminar must also address the following:

- [Lamaze Mission and Fundamentals](#);
- [Lamaze Six Healthy Birth Practices](#);
- [Standards of Practice for Lamaze Certified Childbirth Educators and Essential Content for Lamaze Classes](#);
- [Lamaze Code of Ethics](#);
- [Information about the Lamaze Certification Exam](#).

The recommended student-to-trainer ratio for the seminar is 15 to 1.

Minimum Requirements of Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs

Each program is administered by a Program Director who ensures that the seminar is effectively planned, implemented and evaluated according to the educational standards and adult learning principles defined in the Lamaze Continuing Education Policies and Procedures. Planned content must be current and evidence-based. The seminar content must be based on the standard objectives and template provided by Lamaze International and address the minimum content requirements for Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminars, but they may be developed with unique qualities and teaching strategies.

Some Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs may offer a comprehensive course of study beyond the Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar. Each program is responsible for informing students of the requirements to take the Lamaze Certification Exam and the requirements to complete the course of study for their program, if additional steps are required. Upon successful completion of the Childbirth Educator Seminar, Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs provide participants with a certificate of completion that is consistent with the Lamaze Accreditation Policies and Procedures.

In addition to attending the Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar and self-study from the *Lamaze Learning Guide* for individuals new to the field of childbirth education, Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs should recommend the following activities to all students:

1. Birth observation;
2. Lamaze Childbirth Class observation;
3. Completion of curriculum for Lamaze Childbirth Classes;
4. Practice-teaching of Lamaze Classes.

All Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs are expected to embrace the Lamaze International mission and fundamentals of pregnancy, birth and parenting, and disclose any potential conflicts of interest. Listed below are some examples of activities that are considered possible conflicts of interest:

1. Publicly advocating a position that is contrary to the Lamaze mission, fundamentals or policy;
2. Promotion of products in association with the Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar;
3. Accepting support from individuals and entities that offer goods and services that are not consistent with Lamaze's [Advertising Standards](#) and Lamaze International Conflict of Interest Guidelines.
4. Being an officer, director, employee, consultant, volunteer, or other participant in the operations of another organization with programs in the same or similar fields as Lamaze International.

Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program Directors and Trainers are asked to obtain approval from Lamaze prior to serving as an officer, director, employee, consultant, volunteer, or other participant in the operations of another organization that is active in the same or similar fields as Lamaze. The purpose of this policy is to avoid situations that might conflict with Lamaze's mission and fundamentals, or reflect negatively upon Lamaze.

The examples above should not be viewed as being all-inclusive. It is not possible to list all the possible conflicts and unacceptable activities that might arise in connection with accreditation by Lamaze. These matters will be addressed on a case-by-case basis as described in the Lamaze Conflict of Interest Guidelines.

Minimum Requirements for Program Directors and Trainers

Lamaze International recognizes two leadership roles in Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs: Program Director and Program Trainer.

Program Director Role and Responsibilities

The Program Director is responsible for all aspects of administering a Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program. Program Directors must meet the minimum requirements outlined below. Programs may be administered by co-directors and may have multiple Program Trainers, who must meet the minimum requirements listed below. Program Directors are expected to maintain a connection to the broader Lamaze International community, whether by attending a Lamaze International Annual Member Meeting, utilizing Lamaze Contact Hours for recertification, or other means. If the program has additional trainers, the Program Director is responsible for ensuring that additional

trainers stay up to date on Lamaze content and utilize approved training materials in their seminars, and comply with all administrative requirements. Program Directors are under no obligation to accept prospective Program Trainers.

Program Director Minimum Requirements

- Current LCCE Educator;
- Current standing as an LCCE for at least three years;
- Demonstrated commitment to promoting safe and healthy births including the Lamaze Fundamentals, research, advocacy, media and community leadership efforts.
- Must complete and submit the Lamaze Conflict of Interest Form and current Resume/CV; verify no problematic conflicts of interest;
- Demonstrate commitment to providing evidence-based content; verified by Accreditation and Reaccreditation Application and submitting supporting documents required for Continuing Education Development Process.

Program Trainer Role and Responsibilities

Program Trainers are responsible for teaching the content presented in the seminar or classroom portion of the program. Program Trainers must meet the minimum requirements outlined below and are expected to maintain a connection to the broader Lamaze International community, whether by attending a Lamaze International Member Meeting, utilizing Lamaze Contact Hours for recertification, or other means. Program Directors may choose whether or not to accept new trainers and may require additional qualifications.

Program Trainer Minimum Requirements

- Current LCCE Educator;
- Current member of Lamaze International;
- Support for the mission, vision, and the Lamaze approach to pregnancy, birth and parenting;
- Experience teaching childbirth education classes;
- Must complete and submit the Lamaze Conflict of Interest Form and current Resume/CV; verify no problematic conflicts of interest
- Observation and/or co-teaching may be required, at the discretion of the Program Director

Student Eligibility Criteria for Lamaze Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs

Program Directors may determine student eligibility criteria for admission to their programs. Once individuals are accepted into a Lamaze Accredited Childbirth Educator Program, they are referred to as “students.” Programs are expected to customize their programs based on their eligibility requirements.

Starting a New Program

Lamaze International encourages the development of new Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs and seeks to make the process of establishing a program educationally

sound and efficient. Qualified individuals interested in establishing their own Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs must meet the minimum requirements for Program Directors and must complete the steps outlined below.

1. Contact the Lamaze International Administrative Office, submit Conflict of Interest form and CV/resume.
2. Upon approval, the Lamaze Administrative Office will connect the prospective trainer with programs that are currently accepting new trainers or an Accreditation Council Mentor-at-Large and the prospective trainer may select the option that best meets her needs. An agreement is reached between the applicant and established program or Mentor-at-Large to mentor the prospective Program Trainer.
3. In coordination with mentoring Program Director, establish a development plan and timeline for establishing a new Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program.
4. Submit program development fee.
5. Observe at least one seminar under the supervision of mentor.
6. Teach at least one seminar under the supervision of mentor.
7. Develop the curriculum for Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar based on the standard learning outcome and objectives for Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Seminars.
8. Complete and submit Accreditation Application and Accreditation Agreement.

Mentoring Program Directors Agree to:

1. Provide applicant with a clear understanding of the process for establishing a new program, including information about costs, additional requirements, and timeframe;
2. Provide applicant with comprehensive information about administering and marketing a new program;
3. Support and guide applicant as they develop curriculum for Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminar using the standard learning outcome and objectives for Lamaze Childbirth Educator Seminars;
4. Submit recommendation for the applicant once confident that the applicant has the skills necessary to develop the curriculum for, administer, and market a Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program. This recommendation will be incorporated in the applicant's application to establish a new Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program

Once the above-listed steps and responsibilities have been fulfilled, a minimum of two Accreditation Council members and a designated reviewer from the Lamaze Continuing Education Committee (Education Council) will review and evaluate the application. Upon careful review, they will either approve the application or inform the applicant of additional information or activities which must be provided before the application can be approved.

Approved applicants will be granted provisional accreditation status. Evaluations and paperwork from the first two seminars will be reviewed carefully and if evaluations are positive

and the provisionally-accredited program has submitted all required documents, the program will be granted complete accreditation status. In the case that the Accreditation Council denies an application to establish a new Lamaze Childbirth Educator Program, the applicant will be notified regarding this decision and the rationale.

Established programs may have additional steps required for those interested in becoming Program Trainers and/or establishing their own programs. Established Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs are not required to mentor prospective programs, and any fees and additional requirements may be established at the discretion of the Program Director.

LCCE Educators who wish to become Program Trainers may reach out directly to current Program Directors or contact the Lamaze International Administrative Office in order to be connected with Program Directors that may be accepting new trainers.

Geographical Policy

Lamaze International's policy does not restrict the geographic territory of Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs. However, in the interest of professional courtesy, Program Directors are asked to respect the general domain of other Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs by agreeing to follow the guidelines below prior to scheduling a seminar:

- Check the Lamaze International website for seminar listing(s) within four (4) weeks and 120 miles of anticipated seminar;
- If such a seminar is listed, communicate with the associated Program Director about holding a seminar in close proximity of time and distance and, unless an alternate plan is devised, proceed with both seminars as scheduled.

Program Maintenance and Reaccreditation Process

Accreditation is conferred for a three-year period. To maintain Lamaze accreditation, Program Directors and Trainers must maintain all minimum requirements and submit:

Per Seminar

Continuing Education Planning and Report Documents

Due 30 days prior to each seminar:

- Conflict of Interest Form and CV/Resume for any presenters who have *not* submitted forms as part of regular Accreditation/Reaccreditation Process

Due within 30 days of each seminar:

- Sign-in sheet (must include e-mail address and signature of each participant)
- Copies of participant evaluations
- Summary report

Annually

Annual Reports – Due annually by January 31st of the following year (i.e., the calendar year of January-December 2015 must be reported by January 31st, 2016.)

Annual Accreditation Fee – Due annually by January 31st of the following year (i.e. fees for the calendar year of January-December 2015 must be paid by January 31st, 2016).

Every Three Years

Program Reaccreditation Application – Due every three (3) years.

Reaccreditation Application Fee – Due upon submission of Reaccreditation Application.

Program Directors must maintain copies of all files, reports and applications for their own records.

Incomplete or Tardy Reports and Applications

Any tardy reports or applications will be assessed a \$200 late fee and may be grounds for program probation. The Accreditation Council may require supplemental materials should they determine that an application was not complete when submitted or if additional information is needed to complete the review. Supplemental materials are due to Lamaze International within 60 after the program has been notified of the request. If the additional information is not submitted within 60 days, the program will enter into default status.

Reaccreditation Extensions

If a program is unable to meet the application submission deadline, the Program Director may submit a request for an extension detailing the need for an extension and the expected submission date.

The Accreditation Council Chair will review the extension request and provide a new submission date within 30 days of the request.

Program Default

A program is in default when it has not complied with reaccreditation deadlines and has not been granted an extension by the Accreditation Council Chair. A program in default may not accept new students or hold any scheduled seminars. To regain accreditation, the program in default must submit a request for an extension detailing its plan to restore its accreditation, as well as the annual accreditation fee and a \$200 late fee. The Accreditation Council Chair will review the extension request. Extensions are granted for 90 days and do not alter the schedule of subsequent summary and report due dates.

Change of Affiliation

On occasion, it may be necessary for a Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program to change affiliation. This change in affiliation may occur if there is a change in host institution, change in Program Director, or general transfer of management. Should a program wish to change its affiliation, it must first request approval from Lamaze International. Upon approval, the program must submit the following documents and fee:

- A complete reaccreditation application that details any modifications to the program caused by change of affiliation. If there is no change to a particular section of the application, the applicant may simply state “no change.”
- A letter from the previous Program Director acknowledging the change of affiliation.
- Initial Accreditation Fee: Applied to the year in which program is approved.

Applications will be reviewed by the Accreditation Council and a response will be issued within 60 days. Please be sure to keep a copy of the letter and documents submitted to request a change in affiliation for your files. The program will be considered as provisionally accredited from the date the request is received at Lamaze International until a response to the application is issued.

Change of Program Director

When a Program Director decides to resign or retire and wants their program to continue to operate, they must submit a letter of recommendation to the Program Accreditation Committee at least 60 days in advance. This letter must verify their chosen successor, who must already be a Program Trainer, meets the Program Director Minimum Requirements, and has the skills necessary to manage a Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program. The Accreditation Council will evaluate the recommendation and determine if the successor meets the necessary qualifications within 30 days of receipt of the letter.

Program Closure Policy

If a program wishes to close, the Program Director(s) is required to submit a letter of official notification to Lamaze International. The timeframe each program allows for student completion should be communicated in writing to all students upon acceptance to the program and should be in that program's policy statements.

When a Program Director plans to close their program, they must commit to mentor any students for the time specified in the program guidelines. If the director is unable to perform this duty, they must appoint someone else involved in her program or arrange for another Program Director to mentor their students until the specified time the students were given to complete the program.

The closing program is responsible for paying the full annual accreditation fee for the year in which it closes operations (to be assessed no later than 1/31 of the following year).

If a program closes suddenly due to circumstances beyond control, the Program Director should provide the Lamaze Administrative Office with a list of all current students when and if possible. The Administrative Office will help students connect with other Program Directors to complete the course of their study and will help guide students through the certification process. Refunds are at the discretion of Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs and cannot be guaranteed by the Administrative Office. Students may incur additional fees when transferring to another program.

Adverse Action Policy

To assure quality and ethical practice, the Accreditation Council has developed a process by which violations of Accreditation and Continuing Education Policies or other objectionable practice may be addressed.

General Principles

Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program personnel are expected to:

- Be truthful, forthcoming, prompt, and cooperative in their dealings with Lamaze International;
- Be in continuous compliance with Lamaze International's rules, policies, and procedures;
- Respect Lamaze International's intellectual property rights;
- Abide by laws related to the profession and to general public health and safety; and
- Carry out their professional work in a competent manner.

Scope

This policy applies to complaints received about the quality of a Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program and/or the ethical practice of a Lamaze Program Director or Trainer and adherence to Lamaze Accreditation Policies and Procedures. Actions taken under this policy do not constitute enforcement of the law, although referral to appropriate affiliated and accredited organizations, employers; students; and others may be made about a Program Director's or Program Trainer's conduct in appropriate situations. Individuals bringing complaints are not entitled to any relief or damages by virtue of this process, although they will receive notice of the actions taken.

Responsibilities

The Council will ensure that the Accreditation Policies and Procedures are provided to all Program Directors and Trainers; that all Program Directors and Trainers are informed of the Adverse Action Policy, and that information concerning the complaint process will be available to consumers and the public through appropriate means. All statements and publications made by persons involved in the adverse action process shall be limited to those persons who have a need to know such information as a result of their involvement in the disciplinary process, the oversight of Lamaze International, or the protection of the public.

Grounds

Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Programs must maintain continuous compliance with all rules, policies and procedures established by Lamaze International (as amended from time to time by Lamaze International). Grounds for adverse action include: providing fraudulent or misleading information; misrepresentation of accreditation status; misuse of Lamaze International intellectual property; adverse action by a licensing board or professional organization other than Lamaze International; violation of laws related to public health and safety; identification of quality and/or customer-service issues from program attendees, as indicated on evaluations or through direct communications; and other failure to maintain compliance with Lamaze International's rules, policies, and procedures.

Summary Procedure

In the event of an urgent complaint of significant noncompliance (such as handing out formula samples at a Childbirth Educator Seminar), a program may be placed on probation pending the outcome of a full review through the process outlined below. A program placed on probation may not accept new students or hold any scheduled seminars.

Review Process

The review process for administration of the Adverse Action Policy is as follows:

- To initiate the review process, an individual must submit a written notice describing the situation to the Accreditation Council within sixty (60) days of discovery of the alleged violation by the complainant, and in no event later than two (2) years after the alleged violation occurred. The Chair of the Accreditation Council will refer complaints that are relevant to accreditation and raised in a timely manner to the Accreditation Council; or
- If Lamaze discovers a possible violation, then the Executive Director will confer with the Chair of the Accreditation Council to determine whether the allegation will be forwarded to the Council for review.
- Upon notice of referral to the Accreditation Council, the charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program will be notified in writing about the complaint and will have thirty (30) days to submit a written statement or other material for review by the Council.
- The Accreditation Council shall review all written statements or other information submitted by the individual submitting the complaint and the charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program.
- When notified of the complaint, the charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program shall also be given notice of the right within seven (7) days to request an informal evidentiary hearing before the Chair of the Accreditation Council, at which the charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program shall have the right to counsel and the right to cross-examine the complainant. The Accreditation Chair shall within six (6) weeks conduct the hearing and submit a written report to the Accreditation Council for its review.
- The Accreditation Council shall determine: (1) that the evidence more likely than not supports a finding of noncompliance, or (2) that this evidentiary standard was not met.
 - In the event the Accreditation Council determines that sufficient evidence was not presented to support the complaint, this decision shall be final.
 - In the event that the Accreditation Council determines that sufficient evidence was presented to support a finding of noncompliance, they will determine an appropriate sanction for the violation.
- Any determination of the Accreditation Council shall be final. A final decision on the issue raised by the individual submitting the complaint shall be made within ninety (90) days from the date on which the disciplinary review process is initiated.
- In the event the charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program wishes to appeal the decision, they must submit the reason for the appeal in writing within ten (10) days of notification regarding the decision to the Chair of the Accreditation Council. The

appeal will be referred to an ad hoc Appeals and Mediation Task Force (appointed by the President of the Board of Directors) for review, which may by majority vote change the original decision. The Task Force will render a decision based on the evidence in the record of the review process and the written appeal request; an oral hearing will not be held. The charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program will be notified regarding the outcome of the appeal within ten (10) days. In no event may any change made by the Appeals and Mediation Task Force to the original decision increase the severity of the sanction incorporated in the original decision.

Sanctions

In the event of a violation of or conduct contrary to Lamaze International's rules, policies, and procedures, any of the following sanctions may be imposed by the Council:

- Written reprimand to the charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program;
- Suspension of the Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program;
- Termination of the Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program; or
- Other corrective action.

The sanction applied must reasonably relate to the nature and severity of the violation, focusing on reformation of conduct of the charged Lamaze-Accredited Childbirth Educator Program and deterrence of similar conduct by others.