

Hire with Heart

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO FINDING THE RIGHT DOULA



WRITTEN BY: A DOULA

What is a doula?

A doula is a trained professional who provides emotional, physical, and informational support to individuals and families during their pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum stages. While doulas are not medical professionals, they play a vital role in ensuring that parents feel informed, empowered and supported during their birthing journey.

Types of Doulas:

Birth Doula: A Birth Doula focuses on supporting clients during labor and delivery. They provide continuous care, advocate for the birthing person's preferences, and offer comfort measures like breathing techniques, massages, and different positioning.

Postpartum Doula: A Postpartum Doula supports the families after the baby is born, helping with newborn care, emotional recovery, breastfeeding guidance, and household adjustment.

Fertility Doula: A Fertility Doula is someone who assists individuals or couples navigating fertility treatments, offering emotional support and guidance through the often-challenging process.

End of Life Doula: An End-of-Life Doula provides comfort and support during the end-of life transition.

What Does a Doula Do?

Doulas customize their support based on the needs of the client, but their role typically includes:

- Emotional Support

- Encouraging confidence in the birthing person and their partner.

- Providing reassurance during moments of doubt, fear, or stress.

- Holding space for emotions, including joy, anxiety or grief.

Physical Support:

Offering pain-relief techniques like massages, counter pressure, or heat/cold packs.

Suggesting optimal birthing positions to encourage progress.

Assisting with relaxation methods, such as breathing exercises or visualization.

Information Support:

Educating clients on their birthing options, medical procedures, and interventions.

Partner Support:

Involving the partner in meaningful ways during labor and postpartum.

Coaching the partner to provide effective support.

Relieving the partner when they need rest or break.

How Doulas Differ from Midwives or Nurses



1. **Midwives**

A midwife is a trained medical professional who specializes in managing low-risk pregnancies and births. Perform clinical tasks such as monitoring fetal heart rates, delivering babies, and managing complications.

2. **Nurses**

Are employed by the hospital or birthing center to assist with labor and delivery. Manage clinical care, monitor vitals, and assist with medical procedures.

3. **Doulas**

Focus exclusively on non-medical care. Provide continuous emotional and physical support, often filling gaps in personalized care that many do not have time for.



It is important to understand each individual role when it comes to your birthing team. Understanding that doulas do not replace medical professionals. Instead, they complement the care provided by midwives, obstetricians, and nurses.



Where to Find Doulas

Local resources

Recommendations from OB-GYNs, midwives, or childbirth educators.

Community groups or parenting classes.

Doula directories (e.g., DONA International, local doula organization)

Social media and local parenting forums.



important tip

Doulas help parents to feel empowered by providing evidence-based information.

Hospitals and Birthing Centers- Many have lists or partnerships with local doulas or doula collectives.

Midwifery Practices- Midwives often work closely with doulas and may have trusted referrals.

Prenatal Yoga Studios or Baby Boutiques- These are common community hubs where doulas may leave business cards or host meetups.

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A doula works alongside your medical team to ensure that you feel seen, heard and supported throughout the process. They help you navigate decisions and maintain a sense of calm and empowerment, regardless of how your journey unfolds.

Interviewing Potential Doulas

Preparing for the Interview

Checklist of questions to ask (customizable)
Schedule an initial consultation; most doulas offer free consultation, either in person or virtually. Choose a relaxed setting where you can speak openly. If you're interviewing multiple doulas, keep notes on each one for comparison.

Come prepared; bring a list of questions, a notepad, and your birth preferences (if you have any). Consider bringing your partner or support person if they'll be part birth experience.



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Before Birth:

Educate the clients about different birth options, such as home births vs. hospital birth, water birth, and pain relief choices.

Explains common medical interventions (induction, epidural)

Look for Alignment

Pay attention to how you feel during the interview. Do you feel heard? Supported? Respected? Chemistry and trust are key. Use opened questions to learn more about the doula's philosophy, training availability, and experience

For Example:

What inspired you to become doula?

What's your experience with...

How do you involve partners in the process?

Have you done home births and hospitals birth?

What type of births have you attended?
(unmedicated, epidural, C-Section, VBAC)

Are you certified?



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“It is important to have a doula that is aligned with your beliefs and support your choices no matter the outcome of the birth. ”

Approach & Philosophy

What is your philosophy about birth?

How do you support clients emotionally and physically during labor?

How do you work with partners or co-supporters?

Are you comfortable advocating for me in the hospital?

I'm hoping for a [natural birth/epidural birth/induction]. How would you support that plan?

I'm looking for someone who brings [calm energy, hands-on support, spiritual understanding, etc.].

How would you describe your energy and presence in the birth room?

I'm interested in help with breastfeeding and newborn care. Do you include that in your services?



“Get a clear understanding of everything before the sealing the deal on hiring.

Availability & On- Call Time

Will you be available for my due date?

Do you have a backup doula? May I meet them?

What happens if you're unavailable during my labor?

Comfort & Fit

Why did you become a doula?

What do you love most about supporting birth?

Can you share a favorite birth story?

What makes you different from other doulas?



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Clarification and Understanding is a key. The last thing you want is to have a doula and not understand the services that are provided.

Services & Support

What does your birth package include?

How many prenatal and postpartum visits do you offer?

Do you provide help with birth planning or comfort measures?

Do you offer childbirth education, lactation support, or postpartum services?

Logistics & Pricing

What is your fee and what's included?

Do you offer payment plans or sliding scale?

How do you handle deposits, contracts, and refunds?

Are there any additional costs I should be aware of?

We're budgeting for care do you offer packages that fit different financial needs?



Making Your Decision

Comparing Doulas

Use a decision- making worksheet or checklist.

Finalizing the Contract

When vetting a potential doula, use the notes you prepared before meeting each one to make your selection. Choose someone who aligns with your birthing preferences, your philosophy, and who you believe will support your needs in that vulnerable setting of giving birth. Once you've made your selection, get a signed agreement between both parties and keep a copy of the contract. Once it's signed, it's time to start building a great relationship with your doula!



After the Interview

Reflect: Did you feel safe, supported, and respected?

Follow up with any questions that come up later.

Trust your instincts" choose someone who feels right for you.

Thank you!

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