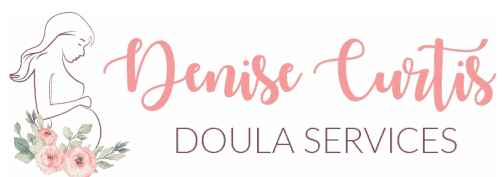


# Choosing a Childbirth Class



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## Things to consider when selecting a childbirth class

A childbirth education class can prepare you for your birth, as well as dispel any fears you may have and broaden your views and philosophies surrounding birth. A good childbirth class will build your confidence in your body and your ability to give birth to your baby. It's always best when shopping for childbirth classes to contact the educator of a few different classes to get a better understanding of what their class looks like and what you will learn so you can have a clear picture of what you're signing up for.

### **Questions to Ask the Educator:**

- ▶ Is a specific childbirth method taught in your class, and if so, what is the method and how does it work?
- ▶ Are you certified to teach a childbirth class and who are you certified through?
- ▶ What would you say are the most important ways a family can prepare for a safe and satisfying birth?
- ▶ What topics will be covered in your class?
- ▶ Will you be teaching partners how to play an active role during labor and birth?
- ▶ Will you assist participants in creating a personal birth plan?
- ▶ How many people will be in the class?
- ▶ How many sessions are in the class and how often will the class meet?
- ▶ What is the location and time of the class?

### **Childbirth Classes Should Cover the Following:**

- ▶ The normal, natural process of labor and childbirth and the practices that support it
- ▶ Changes to expect towards the end of pregnancy
- ▶ The 4 stages of labor: what they are and what each will look and feel like
- ▶ Different coping strategies for managing pain during labor (i.e. laboring positions, breathing techniques, guided visualizations, etc.)
- ▶ The importance of labor support and how your partner/doula can support you during labor and birth
- ▶ Movement and position options during the different stages of labor
- ▶ Medical intervention options and their benefits, risks, and alternatives
- ▶ Proper communication practices with your healthcare provider(s)
- ▶ Creating a personalized birth plan
- ▶ Postpartum expectations, newborn care, and breastfeeding information

### **Tips:**

- While there are certain benefits of taking an intensive 1-day or weekend-long class, it may be in your best interest to participate in a class that meets 5 or 6 times over a span of a few weeks. You'll be able to absorb more of the information and get to know your fellow classmates better and establish meaningful relationships with them.
- Make sure your instructor is not just giving the hospital rules, but instead is sharing all of the information and options so you can make well-informed decisions.
- It's just as important for your partner to be present in these childbirth classes as it is for them to be at your birth. They have lots to learn as well!
- Smaller class sizes are usually the most beneficial as they offer more personalized teachings and allow time for questions. Private classes are also an option if you're looking for a highly personalized class.