

Birth Doula Certification

Become a Birth Doula

When you become a certified birth doula, you gain a respected credential. DONA International certification means that you have met a high international standard, ensuring expectant parents and their medical team that you will adhere to the highest standards of conduct and ethics. It means you are trained to support a woman emotionally, as well as educated to help her determine the services and information that she needs during labor and childbirth.*

Please note training and the purchase of the certification packet must be done BEFORE any births will count toward certification.

For a Suggested Timeline for Birth Doula Certification, click [here](#).

To become a DONA International certified birth doula:

1. Attend a [DONA approved Birth Doula Workshop](#) of 16 or more hours in length. Certification must be completed within four (4) years of attending the birth doula workshop.
2. Read five books from the required reading list and the DONA International [Birth Doula Position Paper](#).

Download the [Birth Doula Required Reading List](#) 

3. Purchase a [birth doula certification packet](#). Each packet expires within two (2) years of purchase. **Packets must be purchased prior to attending births submitted for certification.**
4. Complete one of the following:
 - A. Training in Childbirth Education or Midwifery (see list of approved Childbirth Education organizations)
 - B. Work experience in Labor and Delivery as a Registered Nurse
 - C. Observation of a 12 hour Childbirth Preparation series (not as an expectant parent) or "Introduction to Childbearing" class offered in conjunction with an approved DONA birth doula workshop.

*If you purchase a birth certification packet on or after **8/8/07**, the [childbirth education](#) component for section "C" must be taught by an educator certified through an approved organization. Click here to view the list of [approved childbirth educational organizations](#). Childbirth education must be a minimum of 12 hours in duration. Exceptions may be made for candidates who do not have any of the above certified educators within 30 miles. HypnoBirthing does not qualify.

[Click here](#) for FAQs on the Childbirth Education Requirement for Birth Doula Certification.

The approved childbirth education organization list will be updated accordingly by the home office and uploaded on the website to reflect any new changes.

5. Submit at least one of the following:
 - Proof of completion of lactation consultant, breastfeeding peer counselor or community breastfeeding educator training.
 - Proof of completion of an online study program. Lactation Education Resources offers a basic, "Complete Self-Learning Program" that is affordably priced. [Learn more](#).

A second option is Breastfeeding Basics. Click here for [directions](#) for accessing and registering for the Breastfeeding Basics Online independent study program. You can find their web site [here](#).

- Proof of participation in a breastfeeding workshop offered to birth and postpartum related professionals, such as those offered at conferences and by local lactation consultants (three hour minimum). If you purchase a packet on or after **12/1/07**, the workshop must be taught by an educator with recognized breastfeeding credentials (IBCLC, CLE or CLC).
6. Provide doula service to a minimum of three clients. **All births submitted for certification must take place after the workshop and purchase of the birth certification packet.** The births documented must meet the following criteria:
 - They occur after you attend a DONA International-approved workshop of 16 hours or more. Labor support

must begin before or at the onset of the active phase of labor. For certification purposes, active labor will be considered 4 centimeters.

- The three births combined must have the doula present for a minimum of 15 hours total.
 - Your presence as the birth doula must be continuous.
 - You must remain for the birth of the baby to provide immediate postpartum support.
 - Every vaginal exam must be documented on the Birth Record Sheet's Labor Progression Chart.
 - Cesarean births may account for only one of the three required birth experiences.
7. Document each of the three births for which you provide labor support with:
 - A. DONA International [Birth Record Sheet \(pdf\)](#)
 - B. A 500-700 word account of each birth
 - C. [Client Confidentiality Release Form \(pdf\)](#)
 8. Provide good [Evaluations \(pdf\)](#) of your doula services from at least three clients, three primary care providers and three nurses or midwives.
 9. A complete list of local resources.
 10. Read and sign the DONA International [Code of Ethics](#) and the DONA International [Standards of Practice](#).
 11. Provide two (2) Character References, including current contact information (name, phone and relationship) from one personal and one professional reference. The references will be checked by the Certification Committee.
 12. A type written essay on the value and purpose of labor support (500-1000 words).
 13. Payment of certification processing fee.
 14. Verify that you are a current member of DONA International. [Join now.](#)
 15. Once certified, you must maintain continuous membership with DONA International. Please see our [Lapsed Membership Policy](#) for more information.

*Note, only after you are a [certified](#) DONA International doula will your contact information be on our web site if you desire.

Click here to print the [Certification Requirements](#) (in no particular order).

For additional information, refer to the DONA International Birth Doula Certification Packet, available at the [DONA Boutique](#).