

# Supporting Teen Mothers:

How Doulas Can Make A Difference

**Presented by: Estelle Ross Doula Services**

“Advocating and Supporting You Through  
Life’s Most Precious Moments.”



# Table of contents

**01**

**Who am I?**

**02**

**What is a Doula & What do They do?**

**03**

**Why does Doula Support Matters for Teens?**

**04**

**When and How to Find the Right Support?**

**05**

**Q&A**



01

Who am I?

# About Me

My name is Estelle Ross, and I am a doula dedicated to supporting birthing persons through pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

I have a special place in my heart for those who may feel alone on their journey. My mission is to provide compassionate care, informed guidance, and personalized support—whether preparing for labor or adjusting to life with a newborn.

I'm here to walk alongside birthing persons, ensuring they feel confident, respected, and supported every step of the way.



# About Me

## Training and Certification

Certified Postpartum & Infant Care Doula

CPR and First Aid Certified by American Heart Association

Completion of the Lactation Specialist Program

Experienced Childcare Provider with ECE coursework

Certified by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing in Adult Mental Health First Aid USA



# 02

**What is a  
Doula & What  
do They do?**



# What is a Doula?

A doula is a trained professional who provides emotional, physical, and informational support before, during, and after childbirth. Doulas **do not** provide medical care but help ensure a more positive and empowered birth experience.

# Origin & Meaning of the Word "Doula"

The word "doula" comes from the ancient Greek word "δούλα" (doulē), meaning female servant or caregiver.

## Modern Use & Evolution

- Popularized in the 1970s by medical anthropologists Dana Raphael and John Kennell to describe a trained companion providing continuous childbirth support.
- Over time, "doula" has come to mean a non-medical professional who offers emotional, physical, and informational support during pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.

## Variations of "Doula" Across Cultures

While "doula" is widely used in English, many cultures have their own traditional birth support roles with unique names:

- **Habladora** (Spanish-speaking regions) – A woman who provides birth guidance.
- **Sage-femme** (French) – Translates to "wise woman," referring to birth attendants.
- **Partera** (Latin America) – A traditional midwife or birth assistant.
- **Mamaste** (Japan) – A term related to maternal caregiving.
- **Daya** (India & Middle East) – A traditional birth helper who provides hands-on support.





# What is the difference between a midwife and a doula?

Stage	Midwife (Medical Care)	Doula (Emotional & Physical Support)
Pregnancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides medical checkups &amp; monitors fetal health</li><li>- Orders ultrasounds, labs, and tests</li><li>- Diagnoses and manages pregnancy conditions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Offers emotional support and education</li><li>- Helps create a birth plan</li><li>- Provides comfort strategies for pregnancy changes</li></ul>
Labor & Birth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Delivers the baby</li><li>- Administers medications and pain relief</li><li>- Manages complications or transfers care if needed</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Provides hands-on comfort (massage, breathing techniques)</li><li>- Offers emotional reassurance and advocacy</li><li>- Encourages partner involvement</li></ul>
Postpartum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Checks on mother's physical recovery</li><li>- Monitors newborn health and provides medical care</li><li>- Screens for postpartum complications</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Assists with breastfeeding and newborn care</li><li>- Supports emotional well-being and recovery</li><li>- Helps with the transition into parenthood</li></ul>

## Where Do Doulas Work?

Doulas support birthing persons in a variety of settings, including:

- Hospitals
- Birth centers
- Home births
- Virtual support (for remote guidance)



## What kind of births do doulas support?

Doulas support all types of births, including:

- Medicated (epidurals, inductions)
- Unmedicated (natural labor)
- Cesarean (C-section) births
- Home births
- Hospital births



## How Doulas Help

# Emotional Support

**Doulas may provide the following types of emotional support to you and your birth partner(s):**

- Continuous presence.
- Reassurance.
- Encouragement.
- Praise.
- Helping you see yourself or your situation more positively.
- Helping you feel more in control and confident, and aware of your progress.
- Keeping company.
- Showing a caring attitude.
- Calmly describing what you're experiencing and echoing back the same feelings and intensity, or by mirroring facial expressions.
- Accepting what you and your family want.
- Showing sensitivity to you and your family's emotions, and helping you work through fears and self-doubt.
- Spiritual support if requested, such as sharing prayers or reading from inspirational texts.
- Debriefing after the birth—listening with empathy.

# Physical Support

Some examples of physical support that doulas can provide include:

- Soothing touch with massage, counter pressure, acupressure, or other techniques.
- Creating a calm environment, such as dimming lights and arranging curtains.
- Assisting with water therapy (shower, tub).
- Applying warm or cold packs.
- Holding hands and making eye contact.
- Teaching breathing and visualization techniques.
- Guiding you with positions, movement, swaying, pelvic rocking, or using a birth ball or peanut ball.
- Assisting you in walking to and from the bathroom or changing clothes.
- Giving ice chips, food, and drinks.



# Information & Advocacy

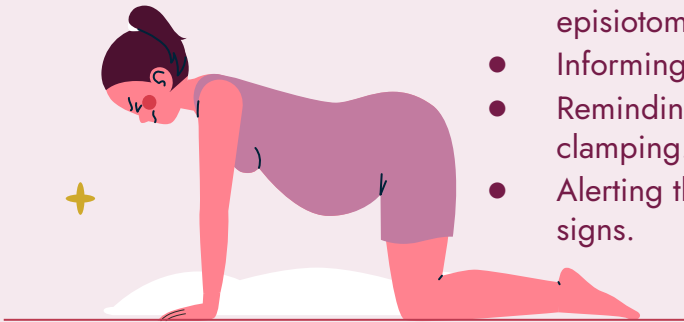
## Informational support can include:

- Educating you or your family about the birthing process, how long to expect each phase of labor to last, and reasons why medical staff may propose medical interventions.
- Suggesting techniques in labor, such as breathing, relaxation techniques, movement, and positioning (positioning is important both with and without epidurals).
- Helping you find evidence-based information about different options in pregnancy and childbirth.
- Helping explain medical procedures before or while they occur.
- Helping your birth partner(s) understand what's going on with your labor (for example, interpreting the different sounds you might make).
- Assisting with communication between you and medical providers about medical decisions or procedures – making sure that you and your birth partner(s) understand medical terms and have your questions answered, and that the medical team understands your preferences.
- Helping you and/or your birth partner(s) to speak up and be more engaged, rather than confused or anxious.
- Communicating with additional family members or friends who have come to visit to explain what is happening, how they can support, and when is the best time to enter the birth room (or why it may be best to wait).

# Information & Advocacy

## Advocacy Techniques Doulas May Use

- Encouraging clients or birth partners to ask questions and express preferences.
- Providing space and time to gather information and make informed decisions.
- Coaching on positive communication with medical staff.
- Facilitating clear communication between clients and care providers.
- Notifying clients of interventions before they occur (e.g., “Dr. Smith has scissors—do you have any questions?”).
- Amplifying a client’s voice when they are ignored (e.g., “Excuse me, [client’s name] is trying to tell you something.”).
- Intervening if a provider ignores a client’s refusal (e.g., “Stop, she said no to the episiotomy.”).
- Informing care teams of trauma triggers or the need for an interpreter.
- Reminding staff of client requests, such as no student exams or delayed cord clamping.
- Alerting the team to concerning symptoms like excessive bleeding or preeclampsia signs.



# What is not Included in Doula Support?



Doulas are not medical professionals, and in general, the following tasks are not performed by doulas:

- They do not perform clinical tasks such as cervical exams or fetal heart monitoring.
- They do not give medical advice or diagnose conditions.
- They do not make decisions for the client (medical or otherwise).
- They do not pressure the birthing person into certain choices just because that's what they prefer.
- They do not take over the role of the partner.
- They do not catch the baby.
- They do not typically change shifts (although some doulas may call in their back-up after 12-24 hours; and some volunteer doulas may take assigned shifts).



+

+

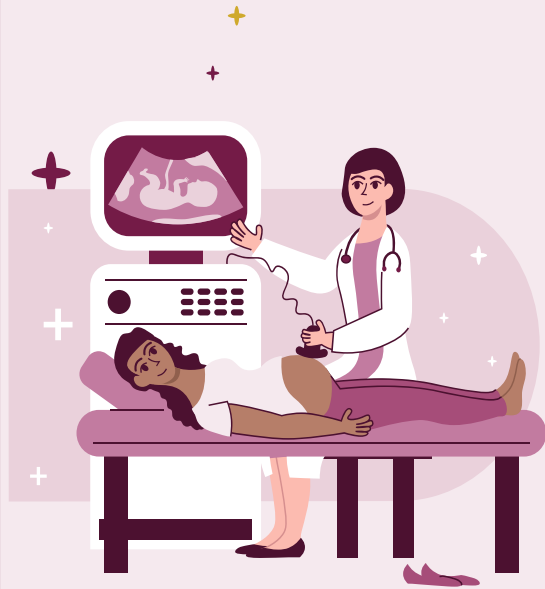
# What are some of the different types of doulas?

- **Birth doula** – Supports during pregnancy, labor, and delivery. +
- **Postpartum doula** – Assists with newborn care, recovery, and emotional support.
- **Antepartum doula** – Explicitly used for high-risk pregnancies or those with medically-directed limitations. +
- **Full spectrum doula** – Supports individuals through fertility, pregnancy loss, abortion, and postpartum. +
- **Abortion doula** – offer physical, mental, emotional support before, during, and after an abortion.
- **Adoption doula** – supports either the birth mother or the adopting family. They offer emotional, physical, and informational support.
- **A bereavement doula** – is there for families experiencing the loss of their baby through miscarriage, stillbirth, or the knowledge of a loss after delivery.
- **Fertility doula** – support people on their pathway to pregnancy and parenthood. + +
- **Recovery Support Doula** – Supporting people with substance use disorders during pregnancy, birth or postpartum.
- **Death doula** – works with folks at the end of their lives or with a family member experiencing loss.
- **(Trans)ition doula** – is a caregiver and companion to the expansive spectrum of gender-affirming transitions
- **An Indigenous full spectrum doula** – holds space for Indigenous clients and tries to find resources and medicine associated with their specific tribal territory or nation. +
- **Cancer Care Doula** – empowers, supports, educates, & helps to navigate the medical system to eliminate barriers to care.



# 03

## Why does Doula Support Matters for Teens?



**39%**

Decrease in risk of cesarean.

**15%**

+ Increase in likelihood of spontaneous vaginal birth.

**10%**

Decrease in the use of any medications for pain relief.

**41**

Minutes shorter labor.

+ **38%**

Decrease in the baby's risk of low five minute APGAR score.

**35%**

Decrease in risk of being dissatisfied with the birth experience.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318258538\\_Continuous\\_support\\_for\\_women\\_during\\_childbirth](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318258538_Continuous_support_for_women_during_childbirth)

# Why Doula Support Matters for Teens

## 1. Emotional Support & Confidence Building

- Many teens experience **fear, anxiety, and isolation** during pregnancy. A doula provides **consistent reassurance** and emotional support.
- Helps teens **trust their bodies** and make informed decisions about their care.

## 2. Advocacy & Empowerment

- Teens may feel unheard or dismissed in medical settings. A doula helps **advocate for their choices** and ensures they receive respectful, patient-centered care.
- Encourages teens to **ask questions** and understand their birth options.



# Why Doula Support Matters for Teens

## 3. Education & Preparation

- Many teens have **limited knowledge** about pregnancy, labor, and newborn care. Doulas provide **age-appropriate education** to prepare them for birth and parenting.
- Helps them develop **birth preferences** and understand medical interventions.

## 4. Reducing Medical Interventions & Birth Trauma

- Studies show that doulas help **reduce C-section rates**, shorten labor, and decrease the need for pain medication. This is crucial for teens, who may have **higher intervention rates** due to stress or lack of support.
- Lessens the risk of **birth trauma**, which can affect long-term mental health.



# Why Doula Support Matters for Teens



## 5. Postpartum Support & Preventing Depression

- Teens have a **higher risk of postpartum depression** and anxiety. Doulas provide **continued emotional and practical support** after birth.
- Helps with **breastfeeding, newborn care, and self-care**, reducing feelings of overwhelm.

## 6. Encouraging Bonding & Parenting Confidence

- Many teen parents **doubt their abilities**. A doula helps them feel **capable and supported** in caring for their baby.
- Provides guidance on **infant care, soothing techniques, and recognizing baby's needs**.

# Why Doula Support Matters for Teens

## 7. Connecting Teens to Resources & Community

- Helps connect young parents to **healthcare, social services, and parenting programs.**
- Encourages **peer support** and finding a community to reduce isolation.

By providing **nonjudgmental care, education, and advocacy**, doulas help teen parents feel **stronger, more prepared, and more supported** in their journey to parenthood.





# 04

## When and How to Find the Right Support?



# When should you hire a doula?

It's best to hire a doula as early as possible in pregnancy to build a strong support system. However, doulas can be hired at any stage—even late in pregnancy or during labor. No matter when a doula is brought in, they provide critical guidance, emotional support, and advocacy for expectant and new mothers.

## When to Seek Support:

- As soon as pregnancy is confirmed
- When feeling overwhelmed or uncertain about pregnancy and birth
- If experiencing emotional distress, anxiety, or lack of support
- When preparing a birth plan and seeking guidance
- If needing advocacy during medical appointments
- During labor for comfort and support
- During postpartum recovery for emotional and newborn care assistance



# How Can You Find a Doula?



- **Local Resources:** Clinics, hospitals, and Birthing centers often have doula connections
- **Online Doula Directories:** Organizations like DONA International, National Black Doulas Association, and local doula networks.
- **Referrals:** From healthcare providers, social workers, childbirth educators, and other mothers.
- **Social Media & Online Communities:** Many doulas promote their services on platforms like Instagram, Facebook groups, and specialized maternal health websites.

# What should you look for in a doula?

## When choosing a doula, consider:

- **Experience & Training:** Look for certification, specialized training, and experience with teen mothers.
- **Personality & Approach:** Choose someone who makes you feel comfortable, respected, and supported.
- **Availability:** Ensure the doula is available during your due date and offers postpartum support.
- **Services Provided:** Some doulas focus on birth, while others offer postpartum, lactation, or bereavement support.
- **Cost & Payment Options:** Ask about sliding scale fees, payment plans, and potential grant funding.
- **Cultural & Personal Fit:** Finding someone who understands your values, background, and specific needs.
- **Client Reviews & References:** Ask for testimonials or referrals from other mothers who have used their services.

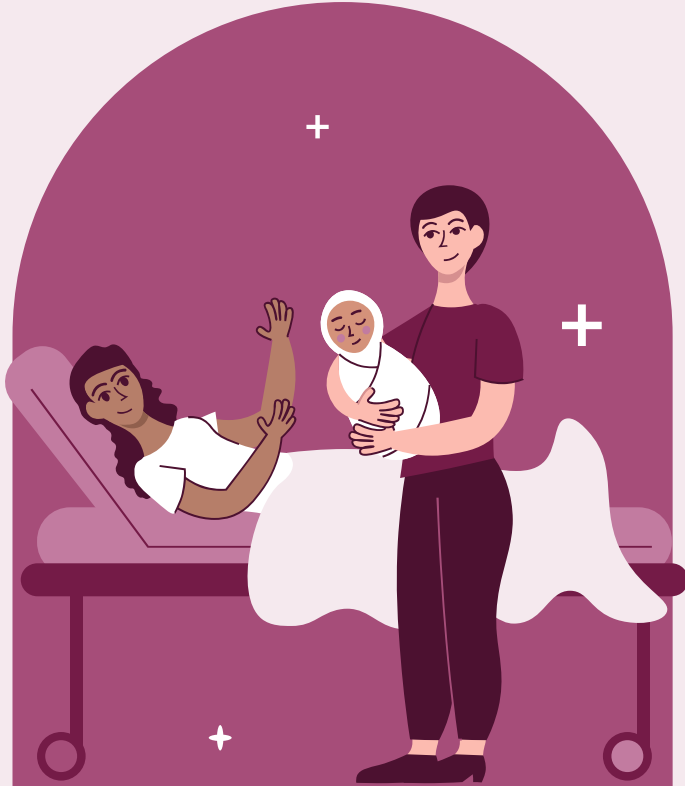
Most doulas offer an initial consultation, which allows expecting parents to determine if the doula is the right fit for their needs. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss preferences, ask questions about the doula's experience and services, and ensure a comfortable connection. A good doula-client relationship is built on trust, open communication, and shared values, making this first interaction a crucial step in finding the right support.



# Are doula services covered by insurance? HSA/ FSA?

- **Private Insurance:** As of January 1, 2025, all health plans in California must cover doula services per pregnancy with \$0 copay, including up to eight visits and labor support.
- **Medi-Cal:** Covers doula services, including pregnancy, miscarriage, and postpartum support. Available through fee-for-service and managed care plans.
- **CalPERS Health Plans:** Starting in 2025, all CalPERS Basic health plans will include doula benefits.
- **HSA/FSA:** Doulas are eligible for HSA/FSA reimbursement, often requiring a Letter of Medical Necessity.





06

**Q&A & Next Steps**



**Do you have any questions?  
Thank You!**

**Support@EstelleRossDoulaServices.com**  
**707-703-2788**  
**[www.EstelleRossDoulaServices.com](http://www.EstelleRossDoulaServices.com)**