



Postpartum Doula Certification

A Doula's Guide (for certification packets ordered after October 2016)

Dear future doula,

Welcome to the amazing work of becoming a postpartum professional. As we are taught by the founders of DONA International, the work of professional postpartum support is so incredibly important to families world-wide. Together, we are making a difference for families! We are honored that you are interested in joining the esteemed group of DONA International certified doulas.

We understand that doulas come into this to work with a variety of clients. Training and certification with DONA International provide a fully comprehensive experience that will prepare you to work as a doula in the capacity that you see fit. From work with a nonprofit to work as a full-time career, the support of a doula is valuable to the big picture.

The DONA International certification process is an at-your-pace one (within four years). That's right! From the time you take your approved postpartum doula workshop until the time you submit your packet, you have up to four full years. Some doulas work through the requirements quickly, in just a few months, while others take every single bit of the four year time span.



Your experience, your training, your pace!

This guide is meant to serve as an intro into our training process. You'll find that the process has several components, including hands-on training; course work; self study; reading; and experiential training/evaluation.

Our experience with training doulas for over 25 years has taught us that the in-person training is essential to getting your doula work off to a good start. After your workshop, our training process includes education in various postpartum topics such as breastfeeding, business, postpartum mood disorders and more.

At the end of the certification process, our doulas report that they feel confident and prepared to support families.

We hope you will find this guide useful as you begin your journey. We invite you to read through the guide, and explore the website. When you're ready, reach out to one of our approved trainers who will help guide you along the way.

With care,

All of us at DONA International

POSTPARTUM DOULA CERTIFICATION: An Overview

Further details (guidelines and required documentation) are available in your Postpartum Doula Certification Packet. Packets may be purchased through the DONA International website.

A DONA certified postpartum doula will receive and document the following items:

In-Person Training:

- Attendance at a DONA approved postpartum doula workshop (valid for four years from completion)

Organizational Requirements:

- Current Membership in DONA International (\$100)
- Purchase a DONA International Postpartum Doula Certification Packet. *This is the beginning of your certification process. (\$45/\$55)
The certification packet includes detailed information and all the forms required for certification. The packet must be purchased prior to any support experiences intended for certification. These support experiences have to take place after attending the workshop.
- Submit completed certification packet, supporting documents and certification processing fee. *This is the end of your certification process. (\$110)
- Agree to and sign the following documents:
 - DONA International Postpartum Doula Code of Ethics
 - DONA International Postpartum Doula Standards of Practice

Additional Class/Book Work:

- Basics of Breastfeeding Education (online or in-person)
- Completion of required texts from the Postpartum Doula Required Reading List

Postpartum Experiences and Evaluation:

- Choose three (3) support experiences that meet requirements for certification.
- Provide thorough documentation (provided in certification packet) of postpartum support experiences, including evaluations of services by primary client and supporting adult.

Home Study:

- Minimum attendance in one approved doula business webinars (online)
- Creation of Local Area Resource List (45 resources in approved categories)
- Essay on the Value of Postpartum Support
- Written Reference from Perinatal Health Professional and Client

Suggested Steps to Certification Financial Investment

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| <p>Membership in DONA International Membership provides benefits to support you in you as you begin the training process, including a subscription to the International Doula quarterly magazine and the eDoula member newsletter and discounts on services and products such as certification packets, conferences, doula liability insurance, office supplies and more.</p> | <p>\$100 /year</p> |
| <p>Sign DONA International’s Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Prerequisite Workshop Reading & Required Reading Participants must begin reading as they plan and prepare for their postpartum doula training workshop. One book from each of the first three sections (see required reading list below) must be read before attending your 27 hour postpartum doula training.</p> | <p>Approx. \$75 +/- Some books may be available to borrow from public libraries or fellow doulas.</p> |
| <p>DONA Approved Postpartum Doula Workshop DONA approved workshops are offered across the globe by a variety of world class, excellent doula trainers. Some workshops have prerequisites, so check with your trainer for details. The postpartum doula workshop is valid for four years from the date of completion.</p> | <p>Approx. \$400 – 700</p> |
| <p>Doula Certification Packet (purchase) Certification Packet will include specific details, requirements and all required forms/directions for the certification process. The packet is purchased via the DONA website and is valid for 2 years from purchase.</p> | <p>\$45 for members \$55 for non-members</p> |
| <p>Business Themed DONA International Webinar Business webinar options can be found on the DONA website under continuing education.</p> | <p>\$20.00 for members \$35 for non-members</p> |
| <p>Breastfeeding Education You may complete the breastfeeding requirement at any point prior to submitting your certification application. See Certification Packet for details.</p> | <p>Approx. \$0 – 50</p> |

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| <p>Essay on the Value of Postpartum Support</p> <p>Your Certification Packet will include some guidance for writing this essay.</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Two References</p> <p>Written references from a perinatal health professional and a doula client. Details included in the certification packet.</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>Certification Processing Fee</p> <p>Certification processing fees cover the cost incurred to review your packet, as well as the materials that you'll receive once certified (certificate/new name tag etc.).</p> | <p>\$110.00</p> |
| <p>Copy/Mail completed certification application</p> <p>Shipping tracking recommended.</p> | <p>Copies and Postage</p> |
| <p>Total Estimated Investment:</p> | <p>Approx. \$700-1100</p> <p>Training and certification investment varies greatly, as doulas find ways to maximize opportunities to invest appropriately (ie. use the library for books, etc.) Most doulas spread the fees out across the training process.</p> |

Be sure to carefully follow the instructions and meet the requirements in your DONA International Postpartum Doula Certification Packet.

Postpartum Doula Certification FAQs

1. How would I know the workshop I am taking is DONA International approved?

Find DONA International approved workshops on our online locators. This way you can be sure that the trainer is DONA approved.

2. Do I have to be a member of DONA International to order my Certification Packet?

No, but DONA International members get a discounted rate when purchasing their packets, and you must be a member at the time you submit your packet for review.

3. I have been working as a postpartum doula for years. Can I get credit for that experience and shorten the certification process?

The postpartum doula certification process is the same for everyone in order to ensure that all those with the credentials PCD(DONA) share a common knowledge base, code of ethics and standards of practice.

4. I was trained by a trainer who is now DONA International approved. Can I now be grandmothereed in as a postpartum doula? Do I still have to pay to attend a DONA International approved training workshop?

In order to achieve standardization of training and give meaning to certification, we do not grandmother in doulas on the basis of previous training. However, some DONA International approved postpartum doula trainers offer scholarships or reduced fees for people they have trained in the past. Trainers set and collect their own workshop fees. Contact your trainer and ask her about her policy.

5. I am certified by another organization as a postpartum doula. What do I have to do to be certified by DONA International?

The postpartum doula certification process is the same for everyone in order to ensure that all those with the credentials PCD(DONA) share a common knowledge base, code of ethics and standards of practice.

6. For the requirement of attendance at a breastfeeding course, do the classes offered by hospitals to prepare mothers to breastfeed qualify?

A breastfeeding course for expectant parents will meet the requirement if you are not an expectant parent at the time of observation, and as long as the class offers a minimum of three hours of instruction. A letter or certificate from the instructor must accompany your application for DONA International certification, as well as the instructor's credentials and a course outline or course objectives. Ideally, the class that you take will be intended for professionals, rather than for parents.

7. I have attended a breastfeeding peer counselor training class. Will this meet the breastfeeding education class requirement for postpartum doula certification?

Yes, if you can provide a copy of the certificate and an outline of the course work. Both must accompany your application for DONA International postpartum doula certification.

8. How long does a candidate have to complete the certification requirements?

When you receive your certification packet from DONA International, there is a date stamped on the inside. You have two years from that date to complete the certification process. If your packet expires, you may purchase a one-time, six month extension for \$10. After the six month extension, if you do not complete the process, you will have to purchase another certification packet. You can request your packet either before attending a DONA International approved workshop or after. You must complete your certification requirements within four years of attending a DONA International approved postpartum doula training workshop.

9. How much do the DONA International approved postpartum doula training workshops cost?

Workshops vary in cost, depending on the trainer and the expenses involved in hosting a training. Trainers set their own fees. Some fees include tuition, books, meals, etc. Contact your trainer to ask what is included.

10. In the population I work with, breastfeeding is uncommon. Do I still need two out of three certifying experiences to be with breastfeeding mothers?

Yes. It is an important part of your education. When you do work with a breastfeeding family, you will be better able to support and educate them if you have had some experience.

11. I did not get a release signature from one of my clients. Can I still use this postpartum support experience for certification?

To accept a postpartum support experience, we must have a signature releasing the information.

12. What are you looking for in the essays that I need to write about my postpartum support experiences?

For each experience, you must provide a written description of the experience, including the services you provided, the family's reaction to your support, and what you learned.

13. What are you looking for in the essays on the value of postpartum support?

The idea here is to help you clarify for yourself and others how you view your role as a postpartum doula. Skills and knowledge are extremely important, but so are a sense of purpose and an understanding of the essence of doula support.

14. How do I verify my DONA International membership?

When you mail your application for certification to DONA International, you must be a current member. You can verify your membership by checking the mailing label on the latest issue of your International Doula magazine. The expiration date of your membership appears in the upper right corner of the mailing label.

15. Where should I send my completed certification packet and application fee?

After paying for the Application Fee online through the DONA Boutique the receipt will include a link and instructions to submit your certification packet through the online submission process.

If you send your packet with another carrier besides the U.S. Postal Service, send it to:

DONA International
35 E. Wacker Dr., Ste 850
Chicago, IL 60601

*Please do not send it signature required on receipt.

16. After I send in my completed certification packet, when will I hear from DONA International?

You may expect to hear within a month that your packet was received in the office. It is difficult to predict when your packet will reach the hands of a reviewer.

17. Is there anything I can do while I wait to hear about my application?

It is recommended that you still treat every postpartum support experience you have after you submit your application as a certification experience: have your client sign a Client Confidentiality Release Form, take notes, request evaluations from the mother and her partner/other adult, and write the essay. That way you will have documentation for another family, in case that is needed.

18. Is there anything I can do to speed up the process?

You can respond to your reviewer as soon as you hear from her. Respond to any questions she may have promptly and let your references know to expect a call from the reviewer shortly.

19. I want to be both a birth doula and a postpartum doula. Should I become a birth doula first?

It is not required. However, this is a decision that you need to make based on your own situation. You might choose one first because of the availability or location of training, or because one is more marketable than the other in your region. Another option would be to work on them at the same time. Some of the readings overlap, and if you are hired for postpartum, you might find it easier to be invited to attend the birth, and vice-versa.

20. Do I have to certify as both kinds of doulas?

DONA International does not require that doulas become certified in both areas. You can become a birth doula, a postpartum doula, or both. This is a decision that you need to make based on your own situation and interests.

POSTPARTUM DOULA CERTIFICATION REQUIRED
READING LIST

The following are the categories from which course participants can choose their required reading. Choose a book in the designated amount from each category. Please note that some books appear in more than one category. This is intentional for persons who want to minimize costs or reading time. The designated number of books from categories 1, 2 and 3 must be read before attending your 27-hour postpartum doula training. Read the MOST recently published edition available for each book, which should be the year indicated, or more recent.

Section One: Becoming a Parent (choose three)

Nobody Told Me About That: The First six Weeks edited by Ginger BreedLove & 14 authors (2018) (new)

The Fourth Trimester: A Postpartum Guide to Healing Your Body, Balancing Your Emotions, and Restoring Your Vitality by Kimberly Ann Johnson (2017) (new)

The First Forty Days by Amely Greeven, Heng Ou, and Marisa Belger (2016) (new)

Mothering the New Mother: Women's Feelings and Needs after Childbirth: A Support and Resource Guide by Placksin (2000)

And Baby Makes Three: The Six Step Plan for Preserving Marital Intimacy and Rekindling Romance after Baby Arrives by Gottman (2017) audio available

Pride and Joy: A Guide for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Parents by Sarah and Rachel Hagger-Holt (2017) (new)

Do Fathers Matter? by Paul Raeburn (2015) (new)

Black Fatherhood: Trials and Tribulations by Khalid Akil White, Thurman V. White, Jr., Dr. Larry Wayne Ellis (2016) (new)

Crib Sheet by Emily Oster (2019) (new)

Section Two: The Newborn/Infant Care and Development (choose two)

The Baby Book: Everything You Need to Know about Your Baby from Birth to Age Two by James Sears, MD (2013)

The Mother of All Baby Books: The Ultimate Guide to Your Baby's First Year by Ann Douglas (2002)

The Wonder Weeks: How to Stimulate Your Baby's Mental Development and Help Him Turn His 10 Predictable, Great, Fussy Phases into Magical Leaps Forward by Frans Plooij, et al. (2017)

Touchpoints: Birth to Three: Your Child's Emotional and Behavioral Development by T. Berry Brazelton (2006)

Your Baby is Speaking to You: A Visual Guide to the Amazing Behaviors of Your Newborn and Growing Baby by Kevin Nugent (2011)

Section Three: Breastfeeding (choose one)

Breastfeeding Made Simple: Seven Natural Laws for Nursing Mothers by Nancy Morhbacher and Kathy Kendall-Tackett (2010)

The Black Woman's Guide to Breastfeeding: The Definitive Guide to Nursing for African American Mothers, by Kathi Barber (2005) (new)

Dr. Jack Newman's Guide to Breastfeeding by Jack Newman, MD (2014)

The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding by Wiessinger and West (2010)

Latch: A Handbook for Breastfeeding with Confidence at Every Stage by Robin Kaplan M.Ed. IBCLC, Robin and Abby Theuring (2018) (new)

The Positive Breastfeeding Book: Everything You Need to Feed Your Baby with Confidence by Amy Brown (2019) new
Mothering Multiples: Breastfeeding and Caring for Twins or More! by Karen Kerkhoff Gromada (2007)
Sweet Sleep: Nighttime and Naptime Strategies for the Breastfeeding Family by La Leche League International (2014)
Helping Baby Sleep Anni Gethin (2009) new

Section Four: Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders (choose one)

Good Moms Have Scary Thoughts: a Healing Guide to the Secret of New Mothers by Karen Kleiman (2019) (new)
What No One Tells You: A Guide to Your Emotions from Pregnancy to Motherhood by Dr. Alexandra Sacks (2019) (new)
I'm Listening: A Guide to Supporting Postpartum Families by Jane Honikman (2014)
Postpartum Depression and Anxiety: A Self-Help Guide for Mothers by Pacific Postpartum Support (2014)
This Isn't What I Expected: Overcoming Postpartum Depression by Karen Kleiman (2013)

Section Five: Birth (choose one)

Nurture: A Modern Guide to Pregnancy, Birth, Early Motherhood and Trusting Yourself and Your Body by Erica Chidi Cohen (2017) (new)
The Doula Book: How a Trained Labor Companion Can Help You Have a Shorter, Easier, and Healthier Birth by Klaus, Kennell and Klaus (2012)
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn: The Complete Guide by Penny Simkin, et al (2018)
Expecting Better: Why the Conventional Pregnancy Wisdom Is Wrong and What You Really Need to Know by Emily Oster (2014) (new)
The Mini Mocha Manual to Pregnancy and Childbirth by Kimberly Seals Allers (2019) new

Section Six: The Birthing Person's Changing Body (choose one)

The Postnatal Depletion Cure: A Complete Guide to Rebuilding Your Health and Reclaiming Your Energy by Dr.Oscar Serrallach (2018) (new)
Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn: The Complete Guide by Simkin, et al (2018)
Your Best Body After Baby: A Postpartum Guide to Exercise, Sex, and Pelvic Floor Recovery (Book 2 Vol. 2) by Jen Torborg (2018) (new)

Section Seven: Postpartum Doula Work (choose one)

Nurturing Beginnings: Guide to Postpartum Care for Doulas and Community Outreach Workers by Pascali- Bonaro (2014)
Nurturing the Family: A Doula's Guide to Supporting New Parents by Jacqueline Kelleher (2019) (new)

Section Eight: Business (choose one)

The Mocha Manual to Turning Your Passion Into Profit: How to Find and Grow Your Side Hustle in Any Economy by Kimberly Seals-Allers (2009) (new)
Body of Work: Finding the Thread That Ties Your Story Together by Pamela Slim (2013)
Purposeful Hustle: Direct Your Life's Work Towards Making a Positive Impact by Deanna Singh (2018) (new)
The Only Grant-Writing Book You'll Ever Need by Karsh and Fox (2019)
Winning Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing and Writing Successful Proposals by Neal- McElrath 5th Edition (2019)
Worth Every Penny: Build a Business That Thrills Your Customers and Still Charge What You're Worth by Petty and Verbeck (2012)
You, Inc.: The Art of Selling Yourself by Beckwith and Clifford (2011)

Section Nine: Grief and Loss (choose one)

Holding Space: On Loving, Dying and Letting Go by Amy Wright Glenn (2017) (new)

It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand by Megan Devine (2017) (new)

Giving Care, Taking Care: Support for the Helpers by Sherokee Ilse (1996) (new)

Resilient Grieving: Finding Strength and Embracing Life After a Loss That Changes Everything by Lucy Hone PhD and Karen Reivich PhD 92017) (new)

Motherless Mothers: How Losing a Mother Shapes the Parent You Become by Hope Edelman (2007) (new)

Companioning at a Time of Perinatal Loss: A Guide for Nurses, Physicians, Social Workers, Chaplains and Other Bedside Caregivers by Jane Heustis RN, Marcia Meyer Jenkins RN, et al. (2004) (new)

Section Ten: Cultural Humility (choose one)

Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty by Dorothy Roberts (2016 or later) (new)

What Does It Mean To Be White, Developing White Racial Literacy (the Revised Edition) by Robin DiAngelo (2016 or later) (new)

Pride and Joy: A Guide for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans Parents by Sarah Hagger-Holt and Rachel Hagger-Holt (2017) (new)

Skimmed: Breastfeeding, Race, and Injustice by Andrea Freeman (2019) (new)

The Big Let Down By Kimberly Seals Allers (2017) (new)

Where's the Mother?: Stories from a Transgender Dad by Trevor MacDonald (2016 or later) (new)

Journey to Same-Sex Parenthood by Eric Rosswood (2016 or later) (new)

Red Medicine: Traditional Indigenous Rites of Birthing and Healing (First Peoples: New Direction in Indigenous Studies) by Patrisia Gonzales (2012 or later) (new)

Deadly Delivery: The Maternal Healthcare Crisis in the USA, by Amnesty International (2010 or later) (new)

Classic Books (optional)

Bonding: Building the Foundations of Secure Attachment and Independence by Kennell and Klaus (1996)*

The Vital Touch: How Intimate Contact with Your Baby Leads to Happier, Healthier Development by Heller (1997)*

The Year after Childbirth: Enjoying Your Body, Your Relationships, and Yourself in Your Baby's First Year by Kitzinger (1996)*

Your Amazing Newborn by Marshall H. Klaus and Phyllis H. Klaus (2000)*

Essential Exercises for the Childbearing Year: A Guide to Health and Comfort Before and After Your Baby is Born by Noble (2003)*

* The books marked with an asterisk are considered seminal works, timeless.