

I want to be a postpartum doula so that I can better assist women and families in experiencing the quality of family life they envision for themselves.

A career in service to mothers and babies awaits you....

Are you ready to:

Empower women to flourish as mothers?

Support women and their partners to become confident parents?

Become a walking resource or expert for the postpartum period?

Create a dynamic career easing the transition into motherhood?

Bring all of your skills together and get paid for your passions?

Have strong in-depth knowledge about the postpartum period and how to share this info with your clients?

If so, you are in the right place.

The postpartum home is a sanctuary where birthing is still happening;
birthing of a person into becoming a parent.

As a postpartum doula, I teach parents how to take care of their child on their own. I work myself out of the job the minute I step foot into their home. Since my nursing degree in 1997 and then becoming a postpartum doula in 2003, I have been devoted to women's health and empowerment. It's a great honor for me to be invited into my clients homes as they settle into parenthood. My upmost goal is to help with that transition in a gentle way, to help parents learn how to change the diaper and bathe their baby in a soothing loving way without baby crying and the parents rushing to finish it. I teach both parents how to feed their baby in a way that male partners feel involved and of great help. When they have a colicky baby, I don't just give them tools on how to help that baby calm down, but I also address coping strategies on how to live life with a baby that cries a lot. It is not the case that I take over child care for them, but rather they hold, for example, the crying baby, while I touch the parent's shoulder explaining to them how to soothe baby down.

It is an incredible journey to witness parents move from feeling insecure into becoming self-confident people. People who know their child inside out and know how to take care of their child on their own at any given time of the day and night.

This is what I want to teach you and more.

Having a newborn baby represents a profound and permanent life change for parents and other family members. Often times, parents are unaware of what constitutes normal newborn behavior and development as well as normal postpartum recovery for the mother.

In our society, many new parents are ill prepared for this transition and find themselves isolated from caring, knowledgeable helpers and advisors. Typically, they don't see their care provider often enough and therefore undergo unnecessary stress and hardship because they don't know how to ask for help.

With these and many more challenges, it is clear that the importance of support, advice, and assistance in the weeks and months following birth cannot be overemphasized. To be supported in a non-judgmental way and from a place of love and support has a long-term impact on the family's physical and emotional health.

Research by experts tells us what many have long suspected: that those new parents who have support and feel secure and cared for during this time are more successful in adapting than those who don't.

Studies have shown that:

- Cultures in which women are cared for by others for a defined period of days or weeks and are expected only to nurture themselves and their babies during that time, have superior outcomes in postpartum adjustment.
- Women who experience support from their family members, care providers, counselors and peer groups have greater breast feeding success, greater self-confidence, less perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, and a lower incidence of abuse.
- Timely referrals to competent, appropriate professionals and support groups can have a significant positive outcome for the family.

- Parents benefit from education on what to expect from newborn, baby-soothing skills, feeding, bonding and attachment and coping skills.
- Rather than being told to “help out”, partners and other family members benefit from concrete instruction and role modeling on how to support a woman during the weeks after birth.
- Support for and from the partner can have a significant impact on their own experience as well as the emotional adjustment of the mother.

Postpartum Doulas are integral to the health of a new family.

FAQ's:

How do postpartum doulas support women emotionally?

- Listen deeply to the emotional rollercoaster
- Nurture others so that mama and partner have space to bond with baby
- Ease anxiety
- Answer numerous questions
- Hold space for her to share

Postpartum doulas spend time addressing what went ‘wrong’ or the unexpected that happened during the birth of their baby. Women and men process their birth experience at home and not just within the first week or two after the birth, but over the next so many weeks and sometimes months. Oftentimes we are a sounding board to help them clarify what and why something happened. Doing one or two postpartum visits that birth doulas provide is just simply not enough to process the trauma that often times happen during the birth for both parents.

What do you provide to mothers & families as a postpartum doula?

In short, postpartum doulas provide emotional, informational, and physical, non-medical support after childbirth.

This means educating clients on all newborn issues from behavior to sleep patterns to newborn appearances (rashes, birth marks, etc).

Educating parents on breastfeeding, bottle feeding, supplementation, etc.

We keep an eye on perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and if necessary make an appropriate referral while in the meantime help with coping strategies. We provide information on the transition into parenthood, from being an individual to being a parent, the role-models they've had growing up and what kind of parents they envision themselves to be.

Of course, we support the entire family. We give tools to help with older sibling adjust to having a baby brother/sister and how the parents can take care of all their children when the doula is not there. We inform our clients on how to take care of pets and help them adjust to a crying little being in their home.

We provide referrals with the sense 'it takes a village to raise a child' and to make sure they get all the help they need, may it be in a professional manner and/or including their community.

And we might help around the house, taking care of the dishes and tidying up the home, doing the baby's laundry and if necessary running errands so the parents can focus on recovery from childbirth, bonding with the baby and getting to know their child.

What are common myths of being a postpartum doula?

* Often people think we are housecleaners or food preparers. I have heard women say, "I do enough household chores at home; I don't feel like doing it at someone else's home!" Doing household chores is one of the smallest parts of services I provide to my clients and some of my clients have live-in housekeepers and a chef so I might not do any of it at all.

*Another myth is that we as postpartum doulas take over the care of the child, that we are basically overpaid nannies. Not true. As postpartum doula we do not take over childcare, but rather teach the parents how to take care of the child on their own. We work ourselves out of the job the minute we set foot into their home. How can we be of service if we make the client dependent on us. In actual fact, we teach them how to be independent and how to get to know their child.

*Clients just want the postpartum doula to take the baby so they have a quiet moment to themselves. This might be true, but a good postpartum doula will in turn teach her clients that the baby actually wants to be with them and not with her

and how to spend some quality time with their child will enrich their relationship for a long time to come.

Is this a viable income?

Absolutely! We are being paid on an hourly basis. The fee range for a postpartum doula in the Los Angeles area is anywhere from \$20/hour to \$65/hour depending on the doula's experience. Most of us have a minimum of 4 hours per day and 8 hours per night. So if we do the math: a doula that charges \$35/hour, is contracted to work 5 nights per week for 9 hours a night, for 4 weeks. This means $35 \times 9 = \$315$ per night, $315 \times 5 = \$1,575$ per week, 4 weeks = \$6,300.

This is a great paycheck!

I am so happy to teach you all that I know and invite you on an incredible journey as a postpartum doula.

About your Mentor Kathrin Auger:

Kathrin Auger offers postpartum doula workshops several times a year as one step in the process toward certification as a postpartum doula by DONA International. The workshop is experiential and interactive, offering participants a broad-based learning experience. Participants learn in an environment that fosters self-growth while providing both didactic and hands-on experience. During the workshop participants will gain in-depth knowledge about the role of a doula during the postpartum period as well as a personal understanding of the emotions and spiritual nature of birth and life with a newborn. Kathrin Auger brings to her teaching a love of pregnancy, birth, women and babies and a belief in the innate ability of each woman to birth and parent in her own unique way. At the same time, she respects a new mother's level of comfort and knowledge. It is her desire to foster this same belief and respect in workshop participants

If you share these beliefs and would like to work with women and their families to help them more fully enjoy the early weeks with their new baby, you may want to consider becoming a postpartum doula, providing physical, emotional, and informational support to the family just after childbirth.