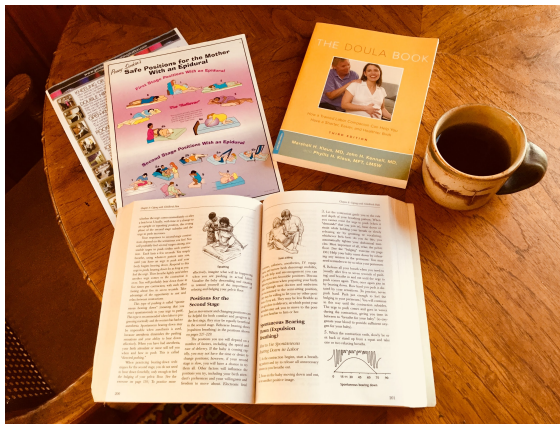


DONA Birth Doula Certification Reading List Insider's Guide



We are so excited that you're on the path to become a DONA certified birth doula! Your life and the lives of the families you will support are about to become rich and rewarding in a whole new way. There are many steps toward certification, and one big one is diving into the reading list.

You'll soak up a huge amount of information by reading at least 7 whole books. The bookworms in the bunch may be excited about this juicy list and the many hours you will spend reading. You audio/visual learners or busy moms might be gulping and

bracing yourselves in the face of so much book learning. Either way, **we at Homegrown Babies have got your back.**

Below you'll find the official DONA Birth Doula Certification reading list, with the insider's scoop on each book. We put this together to help you choose which ones suit you the best.

The title of each book is a hot link to Amazon, where you can purchase a new or used copy. We have also included the length of each book (number of pages) to help you choose the best combo given your timeframe and speed of reading. For those of you with limited shelf space, we've included whether or not a particular title is available for Kindle (at the time of writing this guide).

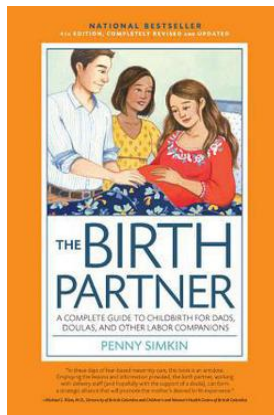
It doesn't matter how you read the book (hard copy or otherwise), but **it does matter what edition you read!** It is very important to purchase the most current edition of each book, even if

you can get the previous edition for pennies. Pregnancy, birth and postpartum information becomes outdated quickly by new evidence-based research. **It is important that you are reading the most accurate and up-to-date information available.**

All of these books are full of information and narratives that will support you throughout your career as a doula. We still refer to many of them after years of practice. They aren't just a part of the certification process, but will be valuable resources for you into the future. There are no bad choices, and you can certainly read more than one from each group!

We wish you happy reading as you embark on the path of meaningful, rewarding doula work.

Required Reading for Everyone



**[The Birth Partner: A Complete Guide to Childbirth for Dads, Doulas and all Other Labor Companions](#) by Penny Simkin (2013 or later)
416 pages. Available for Kindle.**

This is required reading for all, and you need to have a copy in your hand when you come to your training. It's amazing, thorough, well organized, and easy to reference. It may just make it into your doula bag.

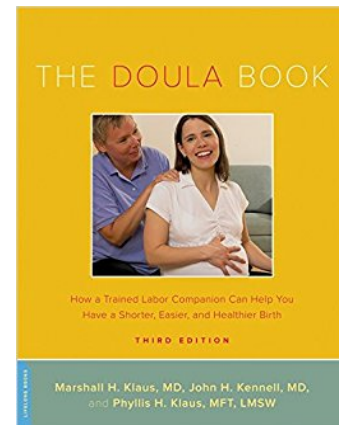
Group 1: The Impacts of Doulas

(read at least one of the following)

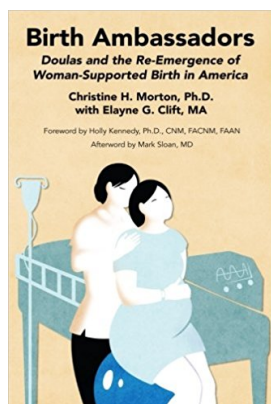
The goal with this group is to learn the impacts that doulas have on birth experiences. These books look at those impacts on an individual level, and as a part of the bigger picture of maternal health outcomes. **This information will be very helpful when you are talking with clients, potential clients, care providers, and even your family and friends about why you do what you do.** Reading a book in this group will help you understand why and how doula care is so important.

★Homegrown Pick!

[The Doula Book: How a Trained Labor Companion Can Help you Have a Shorter, Easier, and Healthier Birth](#)
by Marshall and Phyllis Klaus (2012 or later) 272 pages.
Available for Kindle.



A classic, written over a decade ago by DONA International co-founders. It has been updated several times and is chock full of current research showing the positive impacts of doulas on childbirth outcomes. Interviews with partners and other labor support people enrich this book, including accounts of fathers who were skeptical about hiring a doula at first and were very grateful that they did. This book is heavy on facts and information, but does include some narrative in the form of the above-mentioned personal accounts.



[Birth Ambassadors: Doulas and the ReEmergence of Woman-Supported Birth in America](#) by Christine H. Morton with Elayne Clift (2014 or later) 394 pages. Available for Kindle.

This book tells the social history of doulas in America, focusing on the last 30 years and the emergence of the professional doula. It paints an honest picture of how the maternal health care system has short changed and disempowered women and babies, and how doulas and doula care have arisen out of this scenario as a part of the solution to these challenges, but not one without its own challenges.

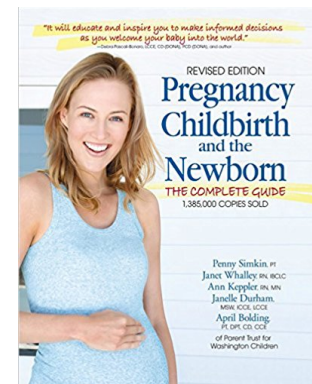
Using a combination of narrative accounts (including interviews with practicing doulas) and factual analysis, Birth Ambassadors doesn't shy away from the difficult issues that face doulas. It is testament to the role of doulas in the fight for reproductive justice

Group 2: Pregnancy (Read at least one of the following)

This is the pregnancy group. Reading one of these books will give you a well-rounded understanding of “normal” pregnancy and the most common challenges or abnormalities that families face. Whichever one you choose will become a useful reference as you go into practice as a doula. Your clients will turn to you for support throughout their pregnancies, and this book will help you offer them solid informational support. While these books do cover birth, the next section goes much more in-depth into labor and the birthing process.

★Homegrown Pick!

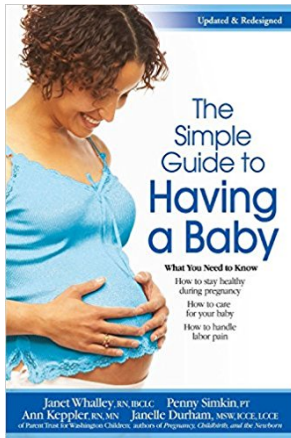
[Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn: the Complete Guide](#)
by Penny Simkin, April Bolding, Ann Keppler, and Janelle Durham
(2016 or later) 512 pages. Not Available for Kindle.



This is the bible of pregnancy and birth books and it has been included as the textbook in many hospital-based childbirth education programs. It covers all aspects of childbearing, from conception through early infancy and focuses on tools to have a safe and satisfying experience. It has an excellent balance of stats (coming from evidenced-based research) and real life anecdotal vignettes from mothers. Throughout the book, there are quotes from mothers sharing their expectations and experiences - these voices put into perspective that there is no one right way to birth a baby. The book does a great job showing a range of birthing options, from unmedicated, to epidural, from in hospital to out of hospital births. There is also a nice section at the end on how to prepare for the newborn, breastfeed and other aspects of basic newborn care.

For you visual learners, this book has informative, yet simple pictures to illustrate techniques that are very helpful for birth doulas and expecting parents. All in all this is one of our favorite well rounded pregnancy and birth books!

★Homegrown Pick For Teen Moms and English Language Learners

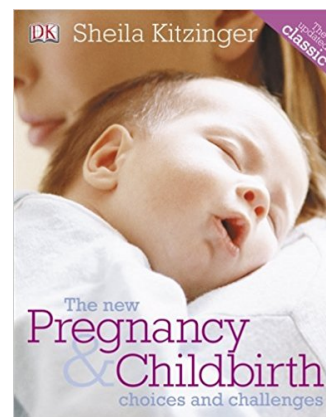


[The Simple Guide to Having a Baby: a Step-by-Step Illustrated Guide to Pregnancy and Childbirth](#) by Janet Whaley, Penny Simkin and Ann Keppler (2012 or later) 240 pages. Available for Kindle.

This is the simplified version of the longer book “Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn,” and this book is NOT intended for college-educated mothers-to-be. This one is geared toward teen parents and anyone with more limited English reading skills. Whether or not you choose to read this for your certification, you should know it is out there, especially if you are planning to work with these demographics. What makes this book really unique is not only that it is written simply, but that it is written simply while maintaining something of the pro-mother, pro-baby bias of their original, more extensive work. Midwives and doulas are mentioned as are some of the problems with too many interventions at a normal birth. The information is clearly laid out, and addresses the main issues relating especially to birth. We have given copies to younger/teen parents who found the "regular" birth books overwhelming in scope and depth, and also to doulas who did not have a strong educational background. In both cases this book was very well received.

[The New Pregnancy & Childbirth: Choices and Challenges](#) by Sheila Kitzinger (2011 or later) 448 pages. Not Available for Kindle.

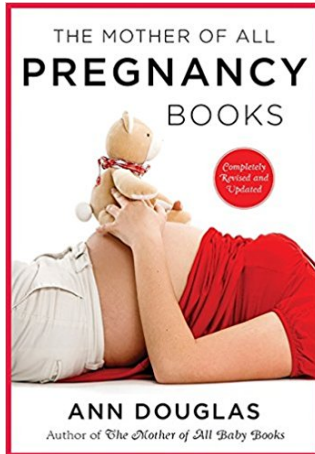
If you do not know Sheila Kitzinger, you should! She was a British childbirth activist and author. She wrote more than 20 books and had a worldwide reputation as a passionate and committed advocate for change. She was renowned as one of the leading authorities on women's experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and motherhood.



For that reason, many doulas and expecting families have really enjoyed Sheila Kitzinger's *The New Pregnancy & Childbirth* as it is a good, all around primer/review. She provides enough basic information that it's accessible for beginners, yet includes substantive, helpful details that even veteran parents/doulas will find beneficial.

For those of you who are visual learners, the photography in this book is bright, clear and easy to look at. Children love looking at the pictures and this can be a great way for families to talk to their kids about pregnancy. The only downside of this book is that sometimes the author has very strong opinions on certain areas of perinatal newborn care that can read with bias. Even

though most doulas will agree with her opinions, the presence of bias can diminish the strength of an information-based book and might not appeal to all parents. This would be a great read especially if you were wanting to recommend this book to parents.



[The Mother of All Pregnancy Books: an All-Canadian Guide to Conception, Birth and Everything in Between](#) by Ann Douglas (2012 or later) 464 Pages. Not Available for Kindle.

Unlike most books, which focus on one aspect of having a baby -- pregnancy, conception, postpartum, relationship issues, etc. -- this one simply covers everything, in chronological sequence. It offers the essential information at each stage of the process. Even more importantly, you'll find out what parents need to be thinking about, considering, deciding, and planning for at each stage.

This book is essential for the more than 51% of people who have been "trying" to conceive, as the first 5 chapters surround pre-pregnancy and fertility. If you are envisioning a doula practice that includes preconception and fertility support, and/or longer-term postpartum support, this may be the best "Group 2" book for you. Especially good is the info about how a mother may feel at each stage -- from the worry over the "Should I even have a baby?" question, to the feeling of dissatisfaction with body appearance, to resentment toward her partner...it's all there. There's also great coverage of how to be healthy before conception, during pregnancy, during labor, and postpartum.

Although the content is fresh and hip, this one has a lot of text with few visuals. It may not be the best choice for more visual learners.

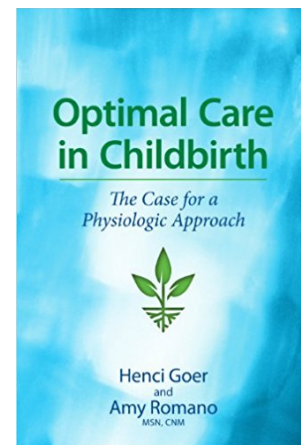
Group 3: Labor and Birth (read at least one of the following)

This will be your labor and birth book. Each of these options covers physiologic, “normal” or “natural” birth, along with discussing common interventions.

★Homegrown Pick!

[Optimal Care in Childbirth: the Case for a Physiologic Approach](#)
by Henci Goer and Emy Romano (2012 or later) 583 pages.
Available for Kindle.

Henci Goer is known for her no-nonsense, researched backed approach to childbirth. She is one of the biggest advocates for normal birth in the U.S. and this book lets you meet her in her truest form. It is not a casual read, and is more like a textbook. It is actually used in college courses! Rebecca Dekker, the founder of Evidence Based Birth calls it an exceptionally well-written book and she uses it as a reference every time she sits down to write an article about evidence based birth.



The purpose of this book is to provide a solid evidence base for optimal childbirth. Optimal childbirth means achieving the best possible birth outcomes for moms and babies, while providing care that uses the least amount of medical interventions possible and also takes into consideration each woman's unique situation and values.

Optimal Care in Childbirth is so well-written and meticulously referenced that it's like owning an encyclopedia on the evidence for normal childbirth. This is must have, as you will not find another source about birth evidence that is more comprehensive and chock-full of mind-blowing statistics. For bloggers and Facebook users, this book would give you plenty of fodder for memes. The statistics and quotes in this book are just that good!

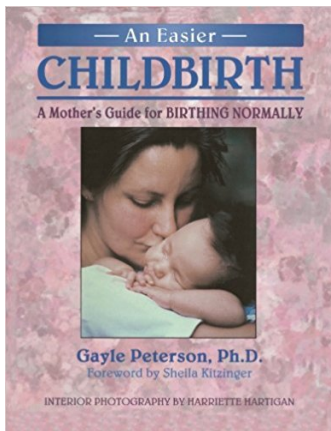
A nice feature of this book is that each chapter stands on its own. It is set up so that you can skip around and read about just one topic. Interested in the Cesarean epidemic? Vaginal Birth after Cesarean? Epidurals? Labor induction? Fetal monitoring? Cord clamping? It is very easy to find evidence on what you are interested in--without having to go through the entire 583 page book from front to back.

A quick note on bias: Henci and Emy do tend to pick apart the research studies that they disagree with, while they don't always do the same with the studies that they agree with. The

authors admit this bias openly in the first chapter, and I believe they fulfill their intent to be both rigorous and transparent.

In summary, this book is strongly recommended for anyone who is interested in the evidence-base for care during childbirth. If “textbook style,” statistic and research-heavy reading overwhelms you, this is probably not the best choice for your certification requirement. It is, however, an excellent reference, and worth having on hand even if you don’t read it cover-to-cover for your certification.

[An Easier Childbirth: A Mother’s Guide to Birthing Normally](#) by Gayle Peterson (2008 or later) 177 pages. Available for Kindle.



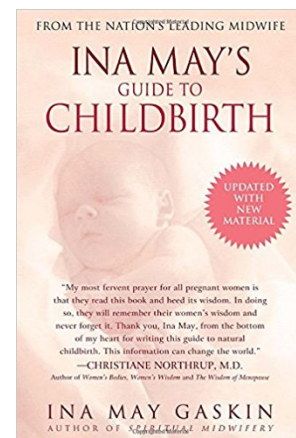
Gayle Peterson is a nationally recognized leader in the field of Perinatal Psychology. This book is her guide for mothers-to-be to prepare psychologically and emotionally for birth and entering parenthood. Unlike many other birth books, the focus of this one is very much on the internal experience and less on the physical realities of birth. The goal of the information and myriad visualization, journaling and other exercises in this book is to empower women to have a positive birthing experience.

As a doula, your role is as much to provide emotional support as evidence-based information to your clients. This book could be an especially good choice if you find yourself in one of two positions: you are drawn toward the emotional and psychological realm and know that you will be emphasizing that aspect of your practice; or if you are uncomfortable with the less tangible, more emotional aspects of birth and feel that you need some concrete tools to be able to support your clients emotionally.

This is not a great reference book on the physiological birthing process, as it focuses more on the mother’s internal response to the physical experience.

[Ina May’s Guide to Childbirth](#) by Ina May Gaskin (2008 or later) 368 pages. Available for Kindle.

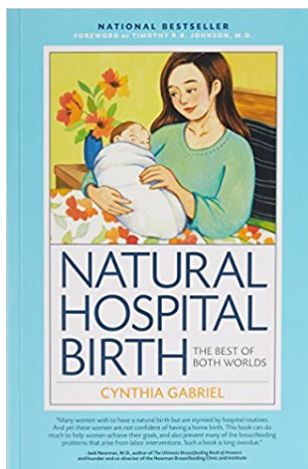
This is a two-part book. It opens with over a dozen birth stories as recounted by women who chose the author, Ina May Gaskin, as their midwife. The second part takes the reader through an approach to natural, healthy birthing, including guidance for pain management, avoiding unnecessary medical interventions, and approaching the postpartum transition. A very clear and easy-to-follow discussion of the physiologic process of giving birth is woven into an upbeat, narrative style of writing. This isn’t just a book geared toward



midwifery births or home births, and includes a section on choosing a caregiver that includes OB/GYNs. The last part of the book discusses maternal healthcare in this country and a vision for a more woman-centered approach that the author hopes will take us into a positive future.

Ina May is known as the nation's leading midwife, and is truly a master in her field. She has over 40 years of practice and over a thousand birth experiences to draw from. She and her team train midwives, and their birth center in Tennessee is known for its high quality of care and extremely good outcomes. She is a powerful advocate for natural birth, and for removing fear from our cultural conception of birth.

Ina May is also a founder of one of the nation's oldest and largest intentional communities, or "communes," which is where her birth center is located. It is fair to say that she was a hippie during the 1970's, and her personal style, philosophy, and way of relating to birth come through in her writing. If you are turned off by the language of "vibes" and "energy," the tone of this book might get in the way of your ability to take in the high-quality information being presented. If, on the other hand, you relate to or feel comfortable with that style of language and attitude, this could be a great choice. Also, if you feel like a "newbie" to the birth world and you want a book that will give you a solid understanding of the natural birth process, approaches to making that process as positive as possible, plus a whole bunch of real-life (albeit slightly dated) birth stories all in one book, this is the book for you.



[Natural Hospital Birth: the Best of Both Worlds](#) by Cynthia Gabriel 272 pages. Available for Kindle.

Cynthia Gabriel is a doula, a childbirth educator and a medical anthropologist with a PhD. She teaches anthropology (mostly medical anthropology and classes on ethnicity/gender/sexuality and social change) at Michigan State University and she does research into cross-cultural childbirth practices. This background really informs her writing and the book is an easy read in comparison to some, but still has a good combination of research, real-life stories, and advice for expecting parents.

It is not as clear and practical about labor positions, pain coping techniques and giving birth without a lot of medical technologies and interventions as some books are, such as *Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Newborn*. Nonetheless, many expectant families love it and find it one of the most useful books for giving birth in the hospital. Some families find it a little 'granola', especially in the birth plan chapter. It is still a good read for someone interested in an unmedicated birth in a hospital setting, even if this style doesn't appeal to them.

Due to the author's background in the cultural anthropology of childbirth, the book has a component about birth practices in Russia as compared to the U.S. This provides an interesting comparison, but unfortunately she does not include information about any other countries.

In her discussion of hospital interventions Gabriel isn't overly critical, but does reiterate how common pain medication is during birth and the fact that hospital staff are often thrown off by someone who doesn't want to take any. The book does not disparage mothers who need interventions due to medical emergencies and gives expectant mothers some great ideas for working within the boundaries of these emergency interventions. It includes some practical advice and non-confrontational verbiage that parents can use with their care provider and nursing staff around discussing interventions. The last chapter does a great job of going over each of the interventions and strategies to avoid them.

Gabriel's way of describing techniques and interpreting statistics can be a little exaggerated. This can be misleading. For example she describes internal fetal monitoring as "using an electrode that is literally screwed into the baby's scalp." In practice the electrode goes a couple of millimeters into the skin on the baby's head. Important for the woman to know, but not nearly as bad as the author suggests. When talking about risks of epidurals she claims that they can cause "intense headaches that can last for days or even weeks (these are relatively common)." A doula should know that these headaches occur about 1% of the time, and are less likely with epidurals than spinals--not exactly "common".

Overall, this is a very popular book for parents and an easy read (which can be oh so nice!) while still being informative. While this isn't our pick if you are going to read just one book in this group, doulas should know that this resource is out there, especially if you plan to practice primarily in the hospital setting.

Group 4: Breastfeeding/Lactation (read at least one of the following)

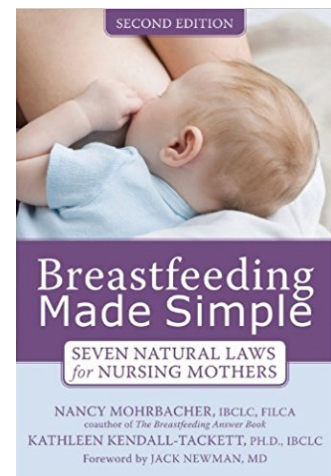
As a doula, you will support new parents establishing their breastfeeding relationships. Even though your clients may have more “professional” breastfeeding support people available (like Lactation Consultants), it's possible that they will turn to you first because of the comfort and ease of your relationship. Also, some of your clients may not have access to other professionals, or know that that is even an option. You will be an important resource for them and stepping-stone to further support if they need it. This group offers three comprehensive breastfeeding guides.

★Homegrown Pick!

[Breastfeeding Made Simple: 7 Natural Laws for Nursing Mothers](#)
by Nancy Mohrbacher and Kathleen Kendall-Tackett (2010 or later) 352 pages. Available for Kindle.

The authors of this book are a dream-team. Both women are International Board Certified Lactation Consultants with decades of practical experience working with women and babies. Kathleen Kendall-Tackett also holds a PhD in Psychology and is very active with research and writing about women's health and trauma, including acting as the editor-in-chief for two peer reviewed journals: Clinical Lactation and Psychological Trauma. They offer the perfect balance of clear, simple, practical advice and the best current evidence that supports that advice. We recommend any and all books by these two!

The subjects of trauma and lactation may seem unconnected, but as you support women in the immediate postpartum you will see that they are not at all. Breastfeeding can be a challenge for many women, and receiving conflicting or excessively complicated advice can push that challenge over the edge. This book isn't about trauma or postpartum mood disorders, but the fact that one of the authors has a background dealing with those issues adds to the strength (and simplicity) of this resource.

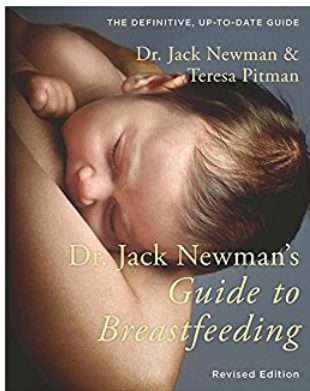


This book is set up as the title suggests, focused around 7 “laws” of breastfeeding. The laws are:

1. Babies and mothers are hardwired to breastfeed
2. Mother’s body is baby’s natural habitat
3. Better feel and flow happen in the comfort zone
4. More breastfeeding at first means more milk later
5. Every breastfeeding couple has its own rhythms
6. More milk out equals more milk made
7. Children wean naturally

The discussion of each of these laws includes explaining the evidence to support it, as well as what happens “when the system breaks down.” This organization makes the book really easy to read through, or use as a reference.

The second section of the book is called “Applying the Laws” and discusses all sorts of practical situations and how to bring the wisdom shared in the first section into daily life with a baby. Pumping and storing milk are discussed, as are common issues that can come up for both mother and baby.



[Dr. Jack Newman’s Guide to Breastfeeding: the Canadian Expert Offers the Most Up-to-Date Advice on Every Aspect of Breastfeeding](#) by Jack Newman and Teresa Pitman (2015 or later) 403 pages. Available for Kindle.

Dr. Jack Newman is a pediatrician who has helped support mother-baby breastfeeding relationships for nearly 30 years. He also helped to found the very first hospital-based breastfeeding clinic in Canada, along with an International Breastfeeding Centre. He is also a father and grandfather of breastfed children and grandchildren.

His interest in the issue of breastfeeding came from receiving so little training in it during medical school, then realizing in practice how very important it was. He wanted to learn to help the mothers who came through his practice who were overwhelmed and discouraged by the maelstrom of often incorrect and/or conflicting information they were receiving. His co-author, Teresa Pittman, is a long time La Leche League Leader and was executive director of the Canadian branch of that organization for three years. She also co-authored the following breastfeeding book (The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding).

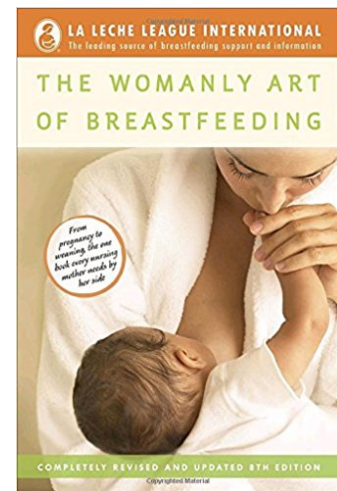
Perhaps as a result of Dr. Newman’s background, each chapter of the book opens with a common myth or misconception about breastfeeding. Through personal, clinical experience the myths are debunked and realistic, practical advice is given in their place. Normal breastfeeding

is described, but the book's structure is strongly based on questions/answers and problems/solutions. One downside of this organization is that the book subtly implies that breastfeeding is hard and can be problematic. While this clearly isn't the author's intent, it is worth noticing and choosing not to replicate in your communications with doula clients.

Throughout the book references are made to videos, which are available (free) through the [Toronto International Breastfeeding Centre's website](#). This is a nice feature, as many breastfeeding issues and solutions are more easy to understand through video than simply text and still images. Whether or not you choose to purchase and read this book, the video resources are a great place to learn more and an excellent resource to send to clients, both before birth as educational tools, and after in response to any issues that may arise.

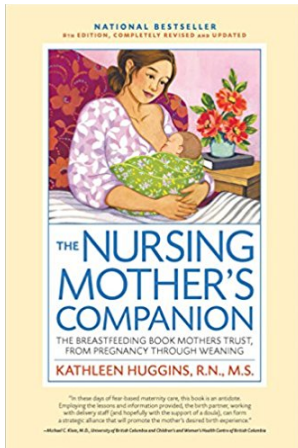
[The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding](#) by Diane Wiessinger, Diana West and Teresa Pitman (2010 or later) 576 pages. Available for Kindle.

This lengthy tome is a veritable encyclopedia of breastfeeding information. The authors are all La Leche League leaders and breastfeeding advocates. Diana West is also an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. The book covers birth through breastfeeding an older child, weaning, and sleep issues. There are lots of great tips and guidance about overcoming breastfeeding issues, including clear illustrations and a section of tear-out quick-reference sheets. La Leche League is an international organization, and the authors draw on the experience of hundreds of women in their practical advice and guidance.



One especially valuable section of this book is a chapter on support networks. Information is shared about postpartum doulas, strengthening family and friend support, cultivating a supportive relationship with healthcare providers, and, of course, connecting to La Leche League chapters in readers' area,

Throughout the book "natural" birth, breastfeeding, and bedsharing are presented as the ideal for every family. The idea is subtly and not-so-subtly implied that anything other than this combo is a compromise, and less ideal. It's unfortunate to notice this lack of objectivity. As a doula, your role will be to support your clients with whatever choices they make around birth, breastfeeding, and their postpartum adjustment. There is an important difference between sharing evidence for the impacts, positive or negative, of certain choices, rather than "pushing" a certain set of choices as the "right" ones. This book leans a bit in the direction of pushing.



[The Nursing Mother's Companion](#) by Kathleen Huggins (2015 or later) 448 pages. Available for Kindle.

Kathleen Huggins is a registered nurse with a Master's Degree in Perinatal Nursing, as well as an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant. She has been in practice for over 33 years and has supported thousands of breastfeeding mothers through her "warmline" support call-service, her work in hospitals, and through helping to start and run one of the first breastfeeding clinics in the US. She wrote the first edition of *The Nursing Mother's Companion* in 1986 and has authored or co-authored four other breastfeeding-related books as well.

The updated version of this book includes ample information on all of the important breastfeeding basics and common issues and questions, plus breastfeeding for working mothers, breast pump reviews, insurance and employer support for breastfeeding, nursing bras, and other specific support for modern moms. Problem-solving "survival-guides" are conveniently identified by colored bands on the pages for quick reference. These quick, solution-oriented sections reference the rest of the book for more detailed information. Geared toward moms trying to troubleshoot, this organization is also really useful for doulas as they respond to clients questions and concerns.

This book is a great choice for new doulas and new mothers alike. It's full of lots of simple, clear illustrations that support all the information shared in the text. The way that it is organized and written make it seem like less of an undertaking to read through, regardless of its length.

Group 5: The Postpartum Time and PMAD's

(read at least one of the following)

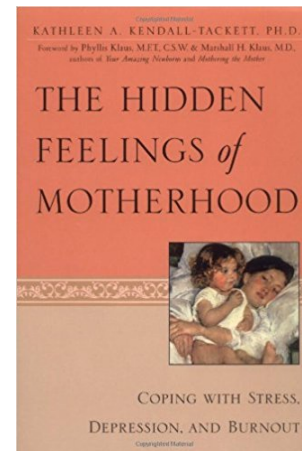
The postpartum adjustment holds challenges for every parent. Many mothers experience difficulties that go beyond what is normal and exhibit signs of true postpartum mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs), like depression and panic attacks. As a doula, you are in a unique position to help identify these issues and steer families toward the support that they need. These books will help you to understand the difference between “baby blues” (normal postpartum issues) and true mental health concerns so that you can support your clients appropriately. They will also give you supportive tools to share with families as they navigate this intense time.

★Homegrown Pick!

[The Hidden Feelings of Motherhood: Coping with Stress, Depression, and Burnout](#)

by Kathleen Kendall-Tackett. 214 pages. Not available for Kindle.

Kathleen Kendall-Tackett is one of our favorite authors (see the Homegrown Pick for breastfeeding above). She holds a PhD in Psychology and is very active with research and writing about women's health and trauma, including acting as the editor-in-chief for two peer reviewed journals: Clinical Lactation and Psychological Trauma. She strongly values evidence-based information. Her writing is always strongly supported by evidence and clear.



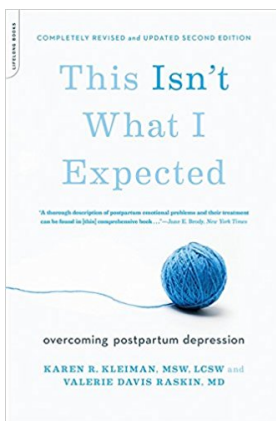
Even though the author draws on and cites studies and statistics, her writing style is accessible. She discusses the current cultural phenomenon of motherhood, including but not limited to the immediate postpartum time. Historical perspectives on the roles of women are included for context. Both stay-at-home and working mothers are included and honored, without valuing one over the other.

This book is very practical. At once it presents evidence and understanding for the real and often overwhelming challenges of motherhood, and maintains that each of us have the power to respond to stresses in our lives in a healthy way. This being said, she doesn't overly espouse the “pull yourself up” mentality that often leads to women feeling weak if they seek help, or, worse, to not seeking help because they think they shouldn't need it. There are chapters on

depression, stress, burnout, sleep, managing work and motherhood, and more. Each chapter is accompanied by an extensive list of other books and resources that help support those areas.

A section of the book is geared toward mothers who themselves experienced abuse, either as children or young adults. Another one offers support for when babies are born prematurely, with special needs, and when babies die. These are all circumstances that you may face as a doula, and reading this book will provide you with some tools to be a sensitive, helpful resource for your clients.

The quality of information presented in this book is excellent. It offers many tools that will be helpful as you support new mothers as a doula. While this book is not specifically geared toward the postpartum period and PMADs, we recommend it because it is so evidence-based, clear, and practical.



[This Isn't What I Expected: Overcoming Postpartum Depression](#) by Karen Kielman and Valerie Davis Raskin (2013 or later) 336 pages. Available for Kindle.

Karen Kielman is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and the founder of the Postpartum Stress Center, a treatment and professional training center for perinatal mood disorders. She is widely published (including several other books) and lectures and conducts training all over the country. She has experience working not only with women struggling with PMADs, but also extensively with healthcare professionals who support these women.

Valerie Davis Raskin is an MD who has also written and taught widely about perinatal mood issues. She co-founded the Pregnancy and Postpartum Treatment Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine, and has been honored by Postpartum Support International for her contributions to increasing awareness of emotional health related to childbearing.

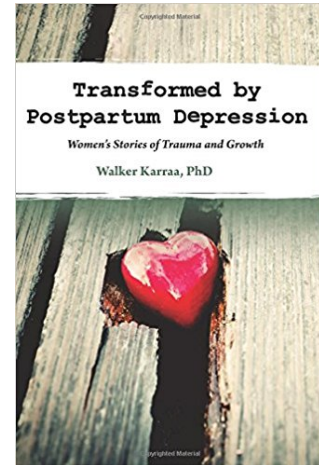
This book is written in a gentle, kind, easy to read style. It includes lots of evidence to support what is being presented, without being too dense. It includes a clear guide to identifying PMADs (as opposed to baby blues), and a self-help program that can be used alone or with a therapist or other support person. There is a whole section for dads/partners, as well as a guide to finding and evaluating various support systems (counselors, groups, therapeutic approaches).

For a doula, the self-help section is very useful, as you will be able to draw from it to make suggestions to clients who are asking for help and support. The part about choosing treatment options is also very useful as you survey your community for further resources to support clients who need another level of help. The strength of evidence presented is excellent, and really provides a solid understanding of how and why PMADs need to be dealt with as true illnesses

and not just “gotten over.” This book is a good choice and will equip you with knowledge and tools to help support your clients in the postpartum adjustment.

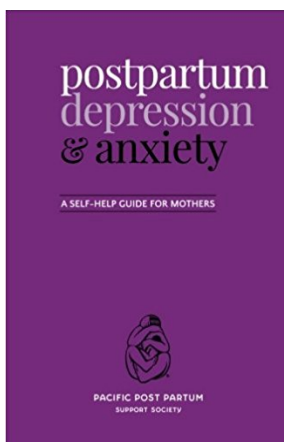
[Transformed by Postpartum Depression: Women’s Stories of Trauma and Growth](#) by Walker Karraa (2014 or later) 284 pages. Available for Kindle.

Walker Karraa, PhD, devoted a large part of her career to qualitative research into perinatal psychology. That’s qualitative, not quantitative (measurable). She studied and documented the felt experiences of postpartum women. This book is a fruit of much of that work. The journeys of 20 women are shared in beautiful, narrative detail in its pages. From their birth experiences, through their extreme struggles and the lack of support or understanding that was provided by healthcare professionals or family members. Each of the women included in the book eventually found their way through, found support, and found their own courageous and creative path toward healing.



If you like stories and learn best through narrative, this is the book for you in group 5. These stories are raw and full of details. Feelings and experiences that aren’t usually talked about are shared in this book. It truly enlightens the reader to the experience of PMAD.

Most women who experience PMAD (or even “just” baby blues) feel that they are alone. The not-so-rosy experience of the postpartum adjustment just isn’t talked about in our culture. The stories in this book have helped many women feel connected and less alone. When you have clients who are struggling in the postpartum, sharing excerpts from this book could be a really supportive gift. If a client is up for reading an entire book and you know that she is feeling challenged by her postpartum reality, this book could be a wonderful gift of support.



[Postpartum Depression and Anxiety: A Self-Help Guide for Mothers](#) by Pacific Postpartum Support (2014 or later)

The Pacific Postpartum Support Society is a grassroots organization based in Vancouver, BC, Canada. It’s foundation is the idea of “mothers helping mothers,” and this book includes the stories and voices of many of those mothers. It is a clear, evidence-based overview of PMAD, including how to tell the difference between PMAD and baby blues, along with general treatment and support options.

Two unique sections of this book are an overview of medications that are used to treat PMAD and a collection of women’s stories of recovery.

While you will never give medical advice to your clients as a doula, sharing the information

presented in this book is an appropriate way to support them. If they are considering medications to treat PMAD, that section of this book can be a helpful resource. The underlying challenge of feeling alone accompanies almost every challenging postpartum adjustment. These stories of recovery can help women feel less alone, along with inspiring them with hope as they read about other women who have made their way through.

Overall this book is a great choice, especially if the concept of PMAD is new to you. It presents very clear information in an easy-to-read style. One small downside of this one is the title. The idea of self-help is surely meant in an empowering way here, but we find it misleading to imply that PMAD can be overcome by oneself. All postpartum mothers need and deserve support, whether from family and friends, you as the doula, and/or other healthcare professionals. Mothers struggling with PMAD need and deserve extra support, and should never have to “go it alone.”

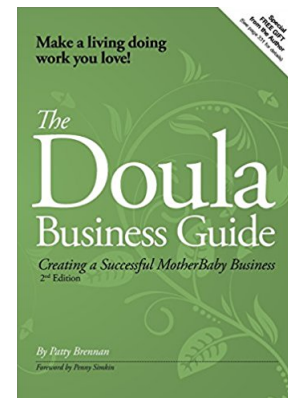
Group 6: Doula Business (read at least one of the following)

Successful doulas are also successful businesswomen. Along with the myriad skills and knowledge you will need to bring to your meetings with clients, their births, and during the postpartum time, you will need business skills as a doula. Unlike many other jobs, it is unlikely that you will be hired by a boss who will manage things for you as a doula. You will need to learn the skills of a small business owner, so that you can run your doula business in the way that works for you. This final group contains books about business. Many of them are specifically about running a doula business, and some are more general.

★Homegrown Pick!

[The Doula Business Guide: Creating a Successful MotherBaby Business](#) by patty Brennan (2014 or later) 352 pages. Not available for Kindle.

Patty Brennan has been involved in birth work for the past 35 years. Her roles have included doula, childbirth educator, midwife, doula trainer, nonprofit executive, author, publisher and consultant. She currently runs the Center for the Childbearing Year in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where she supports families and doulas.

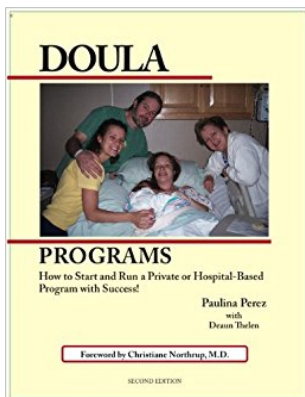


This comprehensive book is aptly named. It's very specific to running a doula business, and covers all aspects of doing that well. Because being a doula is not yet a “mainstream” job, and there are many nuances that make it pretty unique, this book is a great choice. Patty Brennan shares from experience and research, in a very approachable tone. She uses stories to illustrate points, bringing a narrative quality to the book. It's a book about business, but you will get much more from it than simply business advice. Reading this book is a great way to get a feel for what it's really like to be a working doula.

According to the author, this book will help you:

- Determine which business model is right for you.
- Avoid ruined friendships with our frank discussion on the pros and cons of business partnerships.
- Identify seven critical decisions every new business owner must make.
- Command respect from the medical community.

- Build a professional image by establishing and maintaining professional boundaries with clients.
- Achieve success through implementation of low-cost e-marketing strategies.
- Set your fees, communicate with clients about money, avoid conflicts, and get paid without hassles or guilt.
- Stay out of trouble with the IRS while taking every rightful deduction you can and lowering your overall tax liability.
- Determine whether a nonprofit business model is right for you.
- Avoid common mistakes in establishing a doula program.
- Win grants up to \$200,000 and more to fund your doula program.



[Doula Programs: How to Staff and Run a Private or Hospital-Based Program with Success!](#) By Paulina Perez with Deaun Thelen (2010 or later) 260 pages. Not available for Kindle.

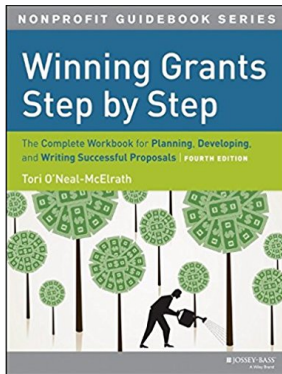
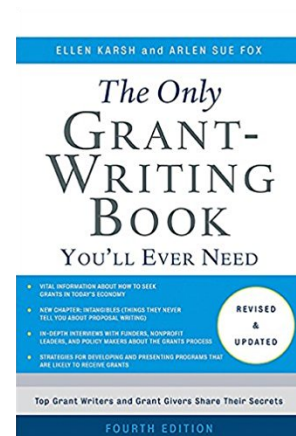
Paulina (Polly) Perez is a perinatal nurse consultant and professional labor assistant with over 45 years experience in maternity care. As an R.N. she has worked extensively in the hospital setting. She has helped many hospitals implement change in their policies and modalities.

This book is a combination of “why” and “how-to” when it comes to starting a successful doula business. Much of what is shared is applicable to both a private or hospital-based program. If your hope is to run a hospital-based doula program this is definitely the book for you, as it goes into a lot of specifics to that particular path. Whatever kind of business model you hope to have, there are lots of templates and step-by-step guides within this book that will prove very helpful.

A gem in this one Perez’s chapter all about existing doula programs. For those of you who learn through stories and examples well, this is a great choice because of this chapter. Her intention in including these accounts of diverse existing programs is to prevent new doulas and new programs from reinventing the wheel. The back of this book is also chock-full of websites, books, and other resources to support doula business women on their way.

[The Only Grant-Writing Book You'll Ever Need](#) by Ellen Karsh and Arlen Sue Fox (2014 or later) 448 pages. Available for Kindle.

This book has nothing to do with doulas or doula businesses, and everything to do with writing successful grants. If you know that you will be approaching your doula business as a non-profit, or you will be working as a doula within an existing non-profit, this book may be very useful to you. It includes exercises that help you integrate the information presented, and quotes from granting agencies on how and why they choose grantees.

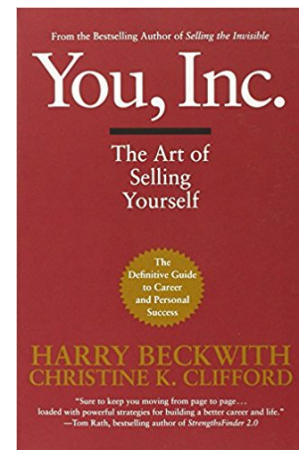


[Winning Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing and Writing Successful Grant Proposals](#) by Tori O'Neal-McElrath (2013 or later) 144 pages. Available for Kindle.

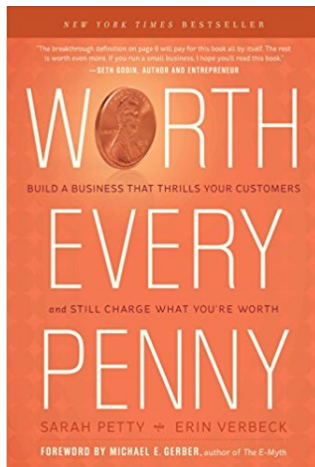
Similarly to the previous grant writing book, this one isn't about doulas but is very helpful if you plan to write grants. The author comes from a background working with low-income communities of color, and the goal of the book is to empower people and organizations to fund change-making efforts.

[You, Inc.: The Art of Selling Yourself](#) by Harry Beckwith and Christina Clifford (2011 or later) 336 pages. Available for Kindle.

Harry Beckwith is the director of his own very successful marketing firm, and his wife, Christina Clifford, is a top sales executive turned motivational speaker. In this book they share what they have found to be the keys to successful selling. The focus is on interpersonal interactions and the seller (you!), not what's being sold. It's organized into many short sections that give explanations and examples of what to do and how to do it in order to successfully market yourself, and whatever you are offering.



This book is in no way specific to doulas, but it does offer some good advice that is helpful as you are marketing yourself and your business. It would be a good choice particularly if you are very timid or shy about "selling" yourself and what you have to offer.



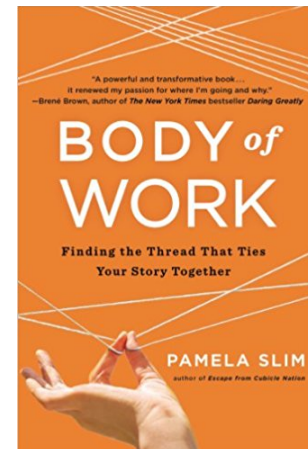
[Worth Every Penny: Build a Business That Thrills Your Customers and Still Charge What You're Worth](#) by Sarah Petty and Erin Verbeck (2012 or later) 180 pages. Available for Kindle.

Erin Verbeck is the “Chief Joy Officer” at the Joy of Marketing, and is an expert in the field of branding and marketing for small businesses. Sarah Petty is the founder of the Joy of Marketing and a former marketing employee of the world’s largest brand: Coca-Cola. She is also a successful photographer. Both women have a background working with big business, but a passion for small businesses. Their book shares this passion and is aimed at small business owners, with the goal of supporting them in charging, and getting, what they deserve for their work. They propose that success doesn’t always come from slashing prices and discounting products to “beat” competitors. Instead, they suggest offering unique and creative products and over-the-top customer experiences.

This book is not at all doula specific, or care work specific, but it does address an issue that comes up for a lot of doula business owners. Charging a fair price for what you are offering can be hard, especially if you live in an area with a lot of doulas. This book breaks down how and why it’s better business to charge what you are worth. The numerous narrative examples given are helpful, although many are geared toward photographers. If you already know that you have a hard time asking for what you are worth, this could be a good read.

[Body of Work: Finding The Thread That Binds Your Story Together](#) by Pamela Slim (2013 or later) 256. Available for Kindle.

Pamela Slim is a career coach and author whose focus is on the modern reality of “careers” often being creatively pieced together. In this books she guides the reader toward understanding the continuity that binds their life’s work together. Through this understanding, in a story form, passion and clarity about career and purpose can be more easily seen.



This book contains guidance and exercises to help you find the “thread” that connects all of your jobs into a career you can understand and feel passionate about. For many doulas, they didn’t graduate high school thinking “I want to be a doula.” Some of us have felt drawn toward the perinatal field, or toward support work, but most of us have had a wide range of different jobs over the years. As you embark on your path as a doula, this book can be very helpful in understanding a sense of continuity and finding the ways that your other jobs and life experience support your work as a doula.