

Questions to Ask about Childbirth Classes

For more information, see: *Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn* page 19, *The Simple Guide to Having a Baby* page 62.

Timing: It's usually best to sign up for classes early in your second trimester. Plan to enroll in classes that will end about two to five weeks before your due date, so you'll be done before the baby comes, but all the information will still be fresh in your mind.

Find out your options for classes:

Most hospitals offer childbirth preparation classes, newborn care and breastfeeding classes. To find an independent educator, do an Internet search, look in local parent-child focused magazines and websites. Our organization Parent Trust offers online classes: <https://parenttrust.org>. You can also search the directories for these national organizations: <https://icea.org>; <https://www.lamaze.org>; <https://www.bradleybirth.com>; <https://hypnobirthing.com>; or <https://www.birthingfromwithin.com>.

Questions to Ask

If you have a choice of classes, look for these answers on their website, or contact them to ask.

Who sponsors the classes?

What is the instructor's background and training?

What is the instructor's experience with birth?

What is the instructor's experience with childbirth education? Does the instructor participate in continuing education in the field? Are they certified by a reputable organization?

What is the instructor/agency's philosophy about birth?

What topics are covered in the class?

Does the instructor cover normal childbirth as well as complications?

Does the class cover all maternity care options and include their pros and cons?

Does the instructor self-help comfort measures? Is there time to practice these in class?

Are pain medications covered? Does the instructor describe both advantages and disadvantages?

Does the series cover postpartum adjustment, newborn care, and infant feeding?

How are the classes scheduled: How many sessions is the class? _____ How long is each session? _____
(Note: classes that last only one or two days can seem convenient, but parents discover that they are exhausting and overwhelming. Classes that meet regularly over a longer period of time let you better absorb the information, practice the techniques, and think of questions to ask at the next class.)

How much time is spent in lecture, and how much in practicing skills?

What is the cost of the series? (Note: A few health insurance plans and government assistance programs cover the cost of childbirth classes.)

How many students are typically in a class? _____ If classes are large (over 13 couples), are there assistants available to provide individual attention?

Is the instructor available to students by phone, text, e-mail, or in person for questions outside of class and after the series?

Is there a reunion class after all the babies are born?