

My name is Maria. I am 15 years old. I was born in Mexico. I am a single mother. I would like to share with you my experience of having a Doula during the labor and birth of my baby.

First, I would like you to know that this was all new to me, especially because I am 15 and still feel like a child myself. Being pregnant was a little confusing for me. Initially, my pregnancy caused my mother great sadness. However, eventually I gained my mother's unconditional support.

My Doula began to instruct me in childbirth education classes at the clinic where I went for prenatal care. I found out that the clinic had a special Doula program for pregnant mothers at no cost. I was very interested and started to attend prenatal childbirth classes. There, I learned a lot about healthy nutrition, pregnancy risks, techniques for labor and delivery, and breastfeeding. I decided at that time, that I wanted to try to have my baby naturally.

My experience in labor started at 5:30 p.m. I called my Doula and told her I was having contractions every 6 minutes. She asked me if my water had broken. Although my water had not broken, she instructed me to go to the hospital. When my Doula arrived at the hospital at 7:00 p.m., I had just been admitted. The doctor checked me the following hour and I was 4 cm. dilated. At that moment, I felt calm and safe because I had my mother and my Doula with me. My Doula gave me great peace of mind as she explained to me the processes I was going through with great confidence and affection. My Doula then asked me to walk around for a while. My Doula was able to help me forget the pain for a few moments, often telling me jokes and old wives' tales. A few hours later, my doctor made another vaginal exam. I was 6 cm. dilated. The doctor then proceeded to break my water. After this, my contractions were much stronger. My Doula showed me how to take long, deep, slow breaths during each contraction. This process was relaxing my contractions and giving good oxygen to my baby. At this time, the nurse encouraged me to have an epidural. However, I refused because I really wanted to have a natural birth. So the pain would not be so intense, my Doula engaged my mother to take my hand and stroke my head.

My Doula then started to perform relaxation massages with oil to my legs and arms. This helped relax my muscles. My Doula started to put pressure on the points of pain, which helped me immensely. At 6:33 am, I was 9 cm. dilated. At this point, I just wanted to be in the hands of my Doula. She was focusing on me, holding my hand, breathing with me, and encouraging me the whole time. At 7:30 a.m., I was 10 cm. dilated and ready to push my baby. My Doula clearly explained to me how I would push for a successful delivery. My Doula showed my mother how to assist with supporting my legs while I was pushing. I pushed for about 30 minutes and with a great medical team, my Doula and excellent coach, and my mother, my beautiful baby boy was born.

I was so happy and thanked my Doula so many times. After the delivery, I was very interested in feeding my baby. My Doula helped me by teaching me how to breastfeed. It was very successful. My baby and I learned very quickly.

In summary, my labor and birth experience was wonderful. I felt supported and encouraged. My Doula at no time left me alone. She gave me strength and courage to have my baby naturally. My Doula also helped my mother overcome so many of her fears through this experience. I am so happy that I had my Doula with me at my delivery. I think that despite my young age, my Doula helped me grow with the help of her words and this will be the most unforgettable experience of my life.