



FAQs

Getting to Know Us (Kate & Ruth)

You likely have questions about us, how we work, and the benefits of working with a doula. Let's answer them.

Tell me about yourselves?

Sure!

We both live in east Toronto with our families – Kate has school-aged twins and Ruth has three school-aged children – and when we're not busy supporting clients, we can be found doing yoga, Pilates, travelling (Kate lived in London, England for 7 years, Ruth has toured numerous times through many parts of Europe as a dancer), drinking smoothies and green tea, and out enjoying nature.

Why did you become doulas?

Our own birth experiences inspired us to become doulas.

Kate:

My twin pregnancy was complex and I had some challenges – but thanks to my doula, it was overall a positive experience because I felt supported and informed. That experience had such an impact on me that I decided to leave my previous career (teaching) to provide the same kind of support to other women.

Ruth:

My personal movement practice and body-awareness was a huge asset when I gave birth to each of my three children. As was the incredible support team that encouraged me through each pregnancy to parenthood experience. I know how deeply the birth experience impacts families and I want each family I work with to have a story that they love to tell.

Are you certified? If so, by what organization? What was involved in becoming certified?

Kate trained with **DONA International** and Ruth & Kate both trained with **Bebo Mia**. We chose to certify through Bebo Mia, which involved written assignments (exams, essays, book reviews), providing support at three births (on a volunteer basis), completing 24 postpartum hours (on a volunteer basis), and a final exam. The Bebo Mia program took place over the course of 12 weeks (as opposed to a weekend, like some) and left us feeling very competent and confident in our abilities as a doula.

What additional training have you received, if any?

Kate has many additional certifications including:

- **Certified Maternal Support Practitioner (doula)**, Bebo Mia
- **Certified Infant Sleep Educator**, Bebo Mia
- **Certified Childbirth Educator**, Birth Arts International
- **Vinyasa Flow Yoga Instructor**, Claire Missingham Yoga
- **Pre/Postpartum Yoga Instructor**, Blooma Yoga
- **Breastfeeding Educator**, Bebo Mia
- **Hypnobabies doula**, Hypnobabies
- **Master Rebozo doula**, Gena Kirby method
- **Babywearing Educator**, Babywearing International

Kate also has a Master's in education, which has proven relevant and useful in her doula work – and a 2nd degree black belt in karate (which is less applicable to her work but something she's proud of nonetheless!).

Ruth also has Many additional certifications including:

- **Certified Maternal Support Practitioner (doula)**, Bebo Mia
- **Certified Infant Sleep Educator**, Bebo Mia
- **Certified Childbirth Educator**, Bebo Mia
- **Certified Breastfeeding Educator**, Bebo Mia
- **Fully Certified STOTT Pilates Instructor**, STOTT Pilates
- **Master Instructor (Faculty Member)**, Balanced Body & PMA

Ruth also has a degree and certificate in Dance and Kinesiology which gives her great working knowledge of anatomy and physiology and helps her get creative in her doula work.

How many births have you been to?

We have both worked with about 2-3 births a month since becoming doulas just over 3 years ago (including our own births). While experience does matter (and we assure you that we have been to a very solid amount of births to support you in the best way possible), the most important aspect of working together is [connection](#). However, if this number is really important for you to know, please do feel free to ask.

Do you primarily provide support in a hospital or home setting?

We've both attended an even mix of births at home, the Toronto Birth Centre, and hospital. If you're having a hospital birth, we can help you stay home as long as possible (if you wish) and navigate 'the system' once we get there. We are happy to support you in whichever setting you have chosen.



Do you have experience with birth complications?

Yes. Births don't always go to plan. We've supported home births having to move to the hospital, babies having to go to the NICU immediately after birth, and planned vaginal births that ended in emergency surgical birth.

We have also supported mothers/families who were dealing with one or more of the following:

- Pregnancy after a miscarriage or loss
- Pregnancy and birth after the loss of a close loved one
- Twins and multiple pregnancies
- Cesarean birth (experience of supporting in the OR)
- Gestational and pre-existing diabetes
- High blood pressure (pre/postnatally)
- Pre-existing epilepsy, asthma, scoliosis and blood conditions
- VBACs (vaginal births after a cesarean)
- Pre-existing & pre/postnatal depression and anxiety
- Pre-term labour and NICU stays

Kate also has personal experience with birth complications as her son was taken to the special care nursery right after birth due to low birth weight, and she had to remain in hospital for quite a while postpartum due to high blood pressure.

Ruth has personal experience with antenatal anxiety and depression in two of her pregnancies and postpartum time.

We can tell you with 100% certainty – both as doulas and birthing mothers who have experienced complications – that having a doula at your side when birth throws you a curve ball is invaluable.

How would you describe your doula 'style'? What do you see as your strength? How do you most often support women in labour?

Clients typically describe us as down to earth, calm, and supportive. We like to say that we're calm and compassionate – but also directive. While our vibe is generally pretty relaxed, we do know when – and how – to step in and take control and bring the focus back to where it needs to be.

In all our dealings with clients, we are conscientious, reliable, and trustworthy, and our objective is – always – to help you understand your options and provide the support you need (both physical and mental/emotional) to feel confident and make the right decisions for you.



How It All Works

Do you have a backup arrangement with another doula in case you're not free when I go into labor? Why did you choose them? Can I meet them? How often have you had to use them?

Yes. This shared care model ensures that you meet and work with both your doulas at the prenatal visits. One of us will be at your birth and we will both come to see you after your birth. On the very rare chance that we were both unable to attend your birth, we also have dedicated back-up doulas whom we consider part of our team. They have done the same training as us and have a similar 'vibe'. You can meet with them prior to your due date.

Do you offer any additional services (yoga, massage therapy, lactation consultation, etc.)?

Yes! We offer private pre- or post-natal yoga, Pilates, private childbirth education, infant sleep education, and breastfeeding education in addition to birth and postpartum support. That said, we share a lot of knowledge related to these areas as part of our doula support packages.

For example, we always discuss – and provide practical strategies related to infant sleep at prenatal appointments, and breastfeeding support is always available to existing clients postpartum.

How do payments work?

25% of your package price is payable upon signing – unless you'd prefer to pay for the entire thing at once, which is fine too. Following the initial payment, there will be one to four instalments, depending on when in your pregnancy you engage us, with the final payment being at 37 weeks.

We prefer payment by e-transfer but can also accept PayPal/credit card.

What is your refund policy?

Unless there are extenuating circumstances (ie: a loss), we are not able to offer refunds.

What happens once I sign on with you?

Once you've chosen a package and submitted your first payment, we'll ask you to complete e-intake and consent forms. Then you'll select the dates for your prenatal visits, and you can choose any books you'd like to borrow from our [lending library](#), and text and email support begins immediately.

How would you help us make decisions around our birth plan? What resources do you have available to help us?

In our prenatal appointments, we'll talk about your options and what we can – and can't – plan for, so that you're fully informed.

We will guide you through exercises and specific questions to help identify your feelings – and ensure all of us are on the same page – as it relates to things like interventions.

From there, we'll identify the key areas you feel strongly about and we'll help you craft your birth preferences.



How do you feel about epidurals / pain medication?

So long as you're informed, we support whatever feels right for you. In our prenatal meetings, we'll talk about your options as it relates to pain relief, as well as the advantages and any risks associated with them so you can make a fully informed decision.

We'll also talk about how we can support you in your choices, and your pain relief options, should you choose to forego an epidural.

At the end of the day, how you feel about your birth will depend less on how it unfolded (ie: epidural vs. not) than on whether you felt informed and supported in your decisions. So that's what we aim to provide for you, no matter what your preferences.

When would you join me during labor?

By the time you're full term, we will have a solid 'game plan' for when you go into labour.

Generally, we ask the birthing couple to check in with us after every OB/midwife appointment from 36 weeks onward and notify us when signs of labour begin to appear. We alternate weeks of being on call for you and will let you know who is on call which weeks so you know who will be attending your birth once you are in labour.

We will remain in contact via text/phone until the point where you feel you need us, at which time your doula come to your home to support you there (if desired), and help you decide when it makes sense to go to the hospital or birthing centre.

Which labor-coping techniques do you think tend to be the most helpful?

We'll talk a lot about this during our prenatal visits. We'll explain how different active and passive postures can help, and how items in your home can also help.

We use the Rebozo method, which uses a long scarf for support, as well as a TENS machine. Kate also trained as a Hypnobabies doula and makes use of certain practices such as affirmations and breathing.

How would you work with my partner to make sure s/he is supported and feels like they are supporting me?

A lot of it boils down to making sure you and your partner are on the same page, which is one of the reasons prenatal appointments are so valuable. He or she will participate in our discussions, learn what you learn, and understand your preferences.

At the birth itself, we're there to support the partner as well as the birthing person – because even the most attentive partner will need to go to the washroom or have a bite to eat eventually! 😊

The bottom line is that we're not – in any way – there to replace the partner; rather we're there to guide and support both of you.

How do you work with the doctors and nurses at the hospital?

Very well! Doctors at Toronto hospitals are generally pretty used to doulas, and understand our role. There isn't any overlap in terms of what we provide vs. them – they are responsible for your medical care, and we are there to support you physically and emotionally.

You can expect there to be a general level of understanding and respect, and that everyone will work together to support you. We can promise you that, even if there's a shift change at the hospital, we'll be with you the whole time – which often provides a welcome continuity of care for the birther.



Will you stay for the entire labour and childbirth, or do you have a time limit for longer births? How long will you stay afterwards?

In the vast majority of cases, we stay as long as you need us (the longest we've been at a birth is 36 hours). In the unlikely event of illness or exhaustion (if a labour were to last multiple days, for example), one of us would step in and take over for the other. That's extremely unlikely (and hasn't happened yet!) since we only take on a few births each month.

As for after birth, we stay for up to three hours – until you're settled, have tried feeding, and we've answered all your questions. We can also take photos for you and help with the transfer to the recovery/postpartum ward.

Do you meet with us after birth to help answer any questions?

All our birth support packages include one or two postpartum visits, where you can ask any questions you have and we'll help you 'digest' your birth. Regardless of what happens, even in positive experience, it's useful to debrief and process the experience.

We can also answer baby care questions, help with breastfeeding, and are available by text for the first month postpartum for anything that comes up. It is our goal that you feel well-supported in the days and weeks following the birth of your baby.

What is your accessibility like leading up to the birth for any questions? What hours are you available? Preferred method of communication?

Once you sign on with us, we'll give you a card that says when and how to get in touch with us. But in a nutshell, we're available between the hours of 9am and 9pm every day for text and email support.

Phone calls can be scheduled on an as-needed basis.

Do you have any other clients due near the time I'm due?

We only take on a few births per month and do our best to ensure that due dates are spread out. That said, nobody knows when a baby will arrive! In the unlikely event that two births take place at the exact same time, each of us would go to one of the births and our back-up would step in to relieve us if needed or handle any other client needs.

What happens if I require an emergency cesarean birth?

It's a common misconception that a doula is 'no longer needed' in the case of a cesarean birth – in reality, you need just as much support; but of a slightly different kind.

If you're having a scheduled cesarean birth we will spend lots of time planning, we will be at the hospital before and after (some hospitals have even let us into the delivery room, but this isn't a guarantee), and will be there to provide the support you need as you heal and recuperate.

In the event of an emergency cesarean birth, there's a good chance you'll have been in labour for quite some time already, with our support. When the decision to do a cesarean birth gets made, we can help you understand your choices and what's going on, and provide support afterwards.



Do you have references we can contact or reviews?

You bet. Please feel free to reach out to these past clients if you'd like a first hand account of what it's like to work with us:

Kate:



Jenn R.

jennifer.robeson@gmail.com



Sara S.

s.saljoughi@gmail.com



Theresa R.

tviola79@gmail.com



Kelly S.

kellydstevenson@gmail.com

For specific reviews please check out the accompanying handout or browse the reviews on Kate's Facebook business page @DoulaToronto.

Ruth:



Kate H.

kate.e.holden@gmail.com



Marie Eve P.

marieeve.paris@gmail.com



Leah B

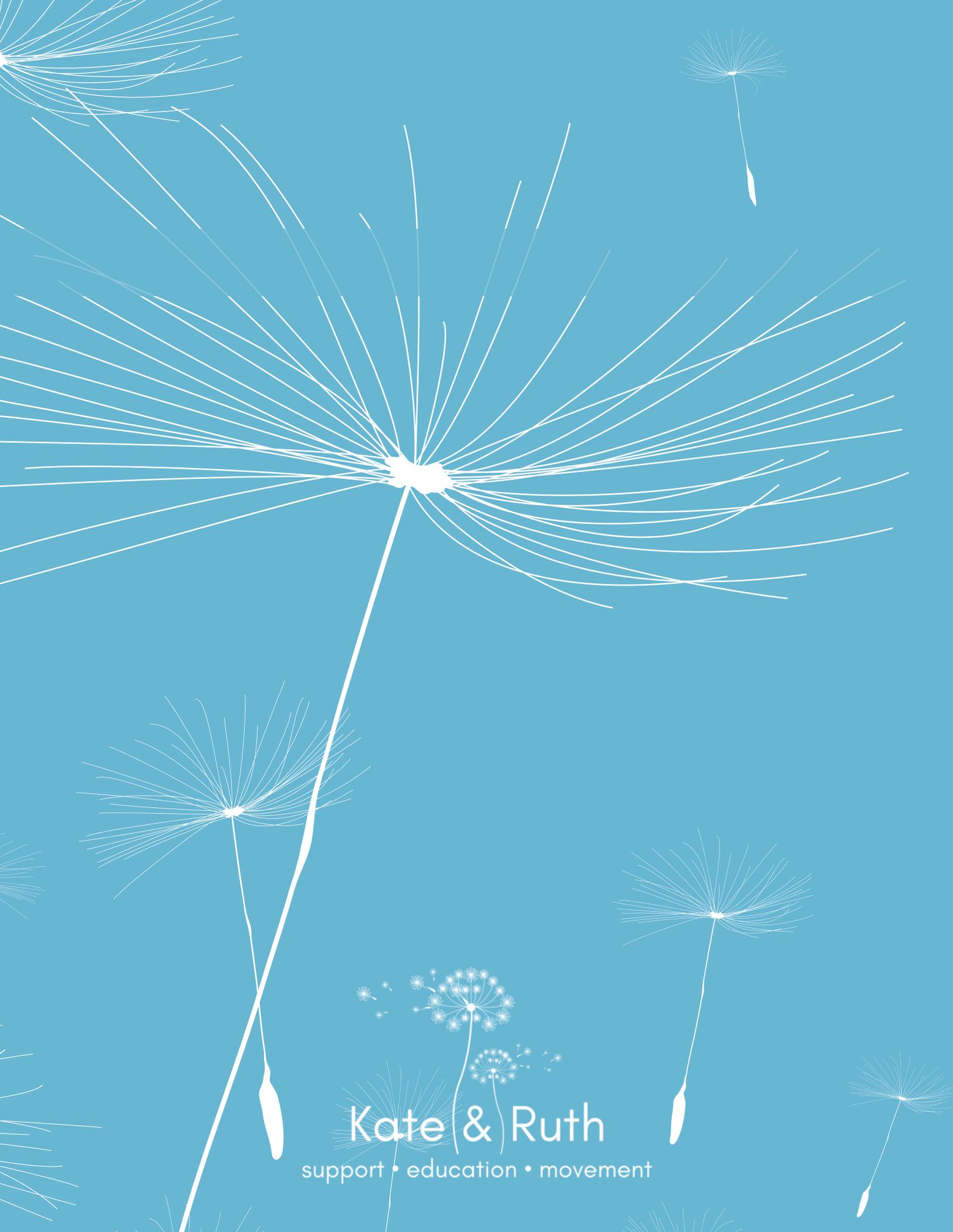
savage.leah@gmail.com



Timea J.

tzjakab@gmail.com

For specific reviews please check out the accompanying handout or browse the reviews on Ruth's Facebook business page @RuthRuttanDoula.



Kate & Ruth
support • education • movement