

Expectant parents sometimes wonder why they should bother taking childbirth classes and parenting classes when there are so many excellent books and websites out there with an abundance of information about childbirth and early parenting. Here are some benefits:

- ★ Getting the Big Picture: In the Information Age, there are *so many* sources of information, it's possible to find out any little detail you want to know with a web search. But within the sea of information, it's hard to know what information you most need to know. A childbirth education class helps to filter the information, and helps you understand the essentials.
- ★ Remembering the Information: A common tenet in education is that students only remember only 10% of what they read. So, even after reading extensively about birth, you may still have retained limited knowledge. And you may not be able to remember this theoretical knowledge during a labor contraction at 2:00 in the morning! On the other hand, students remember 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they do, 90% of what they say and do. Since our childbirth educators use a mixture of lecture, visual images (posters, videos, etc.), demonstrations, discussions, and practice sessions, all these learning modes will greatly increase your understanding and how much you remember of what you have learned.
- ★ Hands-On Practice: During childbirth classes, the instructor will demonstrate comfort techniques such as back massage and relaxation, and you'll get a chance to practice them, to ask questions, and to get feedback on how you're doing. During newborn care classes, there may be dolls for practicing swaddling, diapering, bathing, holding an infant, and positions for breastfeeding. This hands-on learning is important for everyone, but especially the kinesthetic learners who learn best by doing.
- ★ Educational materials: Instructors may be able to offer a wide variety of visual aids, videos, comfort tools, and other materials you otherwise wouldn't have access to. Watching videos of labor and birth can be an excellent tool for preparing for the experience of labor. (Class videos are generally more accurate, realistic, and less sensationalized than birth shows on cable TV!)
- ★ Specific and relevant information: Books and websites may offer outdated information, or information about regional practices which may or may not apply where you will give birth. Your class will cover the most current policies and practices specific to India.
- ★ Social interaction / Peer Support: Childbirth and parenting classes are a great place to meet other expectant parents, and share experiences.
- ★ Learning from your instructor's experience: In a class, you will benefit from the instructor's wisdom gained through experience. From their

experiences with birth, they can offer examples of what labor may feel like, share the lessons they have learned, and offer you personalized answers for any questions or concerns that you may have.

- ★ Designated time: In our busy lives, with so many responsibilities and distractions that pull our attention, it can be difficult to set aside time to think about the upcoming birth, and to plan for life with baby. Signing up for classes means that you have committed a time on your calendar to focus on this preparation.
- ★ Reduced anxiety: Most class participants find that attending a childbirth preparation class helps to reduce their fears and concerns as they learn more about what to expect, and thus have less fear of the unknown.