

# Great Starts Certification Pathway for \_\_\_\_\_

Task	Dates Scheduled	Experienced Instructor/Evaluator	Date Paperwork Completed
Completion of workshop (Great Starts or Simkin Center)			
Pass exam or complete study guide within 2 years of workshop		Great Starts Trainer	
Observation of full series			
Observe additional instructor #1 (optional)			
Observe additional instructor #2 (optional)			
Co-teaching full series (recommended)			
Observed teaching of full series			
Observe birth #1		Location:	
Observe birth #2		Location:	
Fees: \$75 to enroll. Date Paid _____		Fees: \$75 to complete. Date Paid _____	

I have reviewed and understand the items in my pathway to certification. Whenever I complete a step on the pathway, I will inform the Program Coordinator so she can track my progress. All these requirements must be fulfilled in order to become a certified childbirth educator through the Great Starts Program of Parent Trust for Washington Children.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_



## Details about Great Starts Certification

- 1) Training: Take either the Basic Teacher Education program (Teaching About Pregnancy, Childbirth, and the Newborn) through the Great Starts Program or the childbirth educator training workshop (CET) at the Simkin Center.
- 2) Enroll in the certification program. Print and sign page 1 of this document (the Great Starts Certification Pathway). Send to Great Starts Program Coordinator (Parent Trust / 2200 Rainier Ave S., Seattle, WA 98144) with initial payment of \$75 (check made out to Parent Trust).
- 3) Proof of knowledge. Either take certification exam or complete the comprehensive open book study guide (the study guide will be given to you at your initial training or can be obtained from Great Starts Program Coordinator.)
  - a) Timing: must be completed within 2 years of completing workshop. Can be done prior to the other steps, in the middle, or as your last step in the process.
  - b) Goal: to ensure that you have a good, working knowledge of the facts necessary for teaching birth preparation courses.
  - c) Study Guide option: Can be completed at your convenience. When complete, should be turned in to program coordinator for grading.
  - d) Exam option: To schedule your exam, contact the program coordinator. It can be scheduled at any time that is convenient for you and for the person who will be proctoring your exam. Typically, it is taken at our office, with Great Starts staff serving as the proctor; however, for people not living in the Seattle area, we can make other arrangements. Exam will be proctored (monitored), and no study materials may be brought in to exam room.
- 4) Observe a full childbirth education series.
  - a) Requirements for class: Class should be sponsored by Parent Trust for Washington Children. If you would like to observe a class elsewhere, the instructor needs to have been certified, and your plan should be approved by the GS Program Coordinator in advance of the observation. Class must have at least five couples enrolled. Total class time should be 10 - 14 hours or more, and content should include breastfeeding and newborn care, as well as labor and birth information.
  - b) Goal: For you to experience one full series, observing: how the class content is distributed amongst the sessions, what activities are used in class, and how the class' group dynamics evolve. You are encouraged to take extensive notes, or record the classes for your own later use as you begin to develop your own classes.
  - c) Documentation: After the observation, complete a Class Observation Record (see below), which examines class dynamics, teaching methods, and class content. Submit one copy to the program coordinator, and one copy to the instructor you observed. If, for some reason, you miss one class in the series, you must work with the program coordinator to schedule a makeup class which will cover the content that you missed.
  - d) To schedule: contact program coordinator. (206)789-0883 or [greatstarts@parenttrust.org](mailto:greatstarts@parenttrust.org)

- 5) Observe two other certified instructors. This step is optional, but is strongly recommended for trainees who are new to the birth professions and/or new to adult education.
  - a) Requirements: Each instructor must be observed for a total of at least 3 hours each. Although we prefer that you observe Great Starts certified instructors at Parent Trust-Great Starts sponsored classes, it is acceptable to watch instructors in other settings, as long as they are certified by some major certification program.
  - b) Goal: To be exposed to other teaching styles, different class activities, and varied group dynamics.
  - c) Documentation: Complete a Class Observation Record. Submit one copy to program coordinator, and one to the instructor, if they would like a copy.
  - d) To schedule: contact the program coordinator or the instructor of the non-Great Starts class to get the instructor's OK for observation.
  
- 6) Co-teaching of full series. This is not required, but is STRONGLY recommended for anyone new to teaching and/or new to working in the childbirth field.
  - a) Requirements: must be 10 - 14 hours of class time. Must include all the topics covered in a typical Great Starts series, including: labor and birth, comfort techniques, pain medication, hospital procedures, breastfeeding and newborn care. You can co-teach one of the classes Great Starts has already scheduled, or you can plan and arrange your own class in a public setting of your choice, as long as you can find an experienced instructor who is available to co-teach with you. Class must have at least 5 couples enrolled to count toward certification.
  - b) Goal: To work with another instructor, developing an outline collaboratively, and sharing teaching responsibilities. It's a good time to explore ideas and get feedback from your co-teacher to start gaining the experience and confidence necessary to teach independently. You should teach at least 40% of the class content, or more if you're ready for it. Make sure to teach some portions that are focused on conveying information, and others that are focused on interactive or hands-on learning.
  - c) At the end of the series, you should meet with your co-teacher to discuss the series, ask questions, and get feedback. The co-teacher can help you determine whether you're ready to move on to your observed teaching, or whether you might need some extra support and training to be ready to teach on your own.
  - d) Documentation: your co-teacher need only send an informal email to the program coordinator with a brief summary of how the series went.
  - e) To schedule: Contact program coordinator for more details. She will help you schedule a class, and find an experienced instructor to work with. (Note, generally you will not be paid for this time. The experienced instructor will be paid.)
  
- 7) Be observed and evaluated teaching a full series.
  - a) Requirements for class: same as for co-teach.

- b) Goal: To plan a class series and teach a class series on your own, and receive feedback from an experienced instructor. This observation also gives Great Starts the chance to evaluate whether you are ready to teach independently, or whether more support and training is needed. The feedback form the instructor completes is available from the program coordinator.
- c) Documentation: Experienced instructor must complete Feedback Form below. She gives a copy to you, and submits one to the program coordinator.
- c) To schedule: Contact program coordinator to discuss details. (As with the co-teach, you will typically not be paid for this series.) If you are hoping to teach a Great Starts class, you will be required to first interview with the Program Coordinator and Great Starts Trainer for approval. If you were not approved, they would offer suggestions of other places you might be able to student teach.

8) Observe two births.

- a) Requirements: at any time after completing the workshop and before completing certification, you must attend two births, as: an observer, a doula, a nurse, or a friend. (You could count your own labor and birth as one of these births, but not both.) At least one must be a hospital birth. Note that we only require two births, but we recommend doing many more. The more birth experience you have, the better childbirth educator you can be.
- b) Goal: to get hands-on experience of labor & birth, parents' interaction with caregivers, current policies and technologies.
- c) Documentation: Send a note to the program coordinator, which contains: the date of the birth, location, a brief description of the mother (age, socioeconomic info, partner, etc... no identifying information), and a paragraph-long description of the labor and birth, and what you learned.

Timing: Within the limits below, you can choose what order to do things in, and how quickly you to move through steps.

The workshop is the first step. Following that, you must enroll in the certification program and pay initial fee. Once you are enrolled, you can begin doing observations. After the observations are complete, you can begin co-teaching. After your co-teacher declares you ready to move on, you can do your observed teaching. The experienced instructor must give her final approval before you are considered to have completed the observed teaching.

The exam and birth observations can be done at any time during the certification process, as long as the exam is completed within two years of the workshop. Typically, you are expected to complete the full process within two years of training. If you need to take longer, you can request a one-year extension, by contacting the program coordinator.

Fees: To begin your observations, you must first enroll in the certification program. At this time, you pay half of the certification fee (\$75). This fee must be submitted before you begin your co-teaching. You also give a signed copy of your "certification pathway checklist" to the program coordinator so she can track your progress. Keep the other copy for yourself.

At the completion of all your other tasks, you must pay the other half of the certification fee (\$75) in order to complete the process and receive your certificate.

Fees should be submitted directly to the Great Starts office. Send care of the program coordinator.



**Great Starts™**  
Birth & Family Education  
**CLASS OBSERVATION RECORD**

**Basic Information**

Observing Trainee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Classes: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of couples in class \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_ Entire Series (Number of classes in series \_\_\_\_\_ Total number of class hours \_\_\_\_\_ )  
\_\_ **or** 3 hrs of observation

Sponsoring Organization / Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Years experience: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher's Educational Background / Certification: \_\_\_\_\_

**Class Content**

Keep one copy of this form for your information, submit another copy to the Great Starts Trainer to verify your observation.

In addition, we strongly recommend that you take copious notes about class content. Get a copy of the outline, and take detailed notes on topics covered, exercises, comfort measures, teaching strategies, how long it took to cover each topic, etc. Keep these for your own use.

**Class Dynamics**

1. Environment: Was the room comfortable, good lighting, roomy, clean, good temperature, class able to see instructor and visual aids? How were chairs arranged? Were there things an instructor could do to make the environment better for learning?

2. Warm-ing Up: What techniques did instructor use to warm up the class? (Icebreakers, introductions, informal interactions before class.)

3. Teaching techniques: What methods did she use: lecture, group discussion, games, brainstorming, demonstrations, etc. What was your favorite activity? Were there any activities that didn't go well?

4. Pain Coping: How much time was spent on strategies for pain coping? What techniques were taught? Did the couples demonstrate understanding and mastery of the skills?

5. Interest: Did most class members seem interested and attentive? (If not, why not? What strategies did the instructor use to gain their attention?)

6. Q&A: Were questions encouraged? YES NO Did the class ask questions? YES NO  
Were they answered to the satisfaction of the person who asked? YES NO

7. Group dynamics: Were class members interested in and supportive of each other? How was this facilitated by the instructor? If not, why not?

8. Couple dynamics: Did the students seem to work well with their partners? Did couples seem comfortable being close, touching, showing care for each other? How was this facilitated by the instructor? If a couple did not work well together, describe their behavior. Any thoughts on how to help them?

### **Observations of the Teacher**

10. Interactions with you as observer: Was she welcoming and friendly to you without losing her focus on interacting with her students?

11. Interactions with Students: Was she welcoming to her students, and warm and interested in them? What demonstrated this?

12. Did she seem to enjoy her teaching? Did she seem committed to offering the best possible experience? How did her attitude affect the students?

13. Clarity of presentation: Did she present information clearly, present exercises / coping techniques well, so class could learn them? Comment on strengths and weaknesses.

14. Bias: Did she, in your opinion, have bias in her teaching (natural childbirth, faith in medications, “doctor knows best”, “parents know best”, etc.) Describe the bias. Did bias interfere with her effectiveness?

15. How did she incorporate the ICEA philosophy: “freedom of choice based on knowledge of alternatives”?

16. How did she bring in her own experience (with her birth and other births she’d attended)? In what ways was that helpful? Were there times it was not helpful?

17. What is your overall impression of this class? Did it appear to meet the student’s needs?

**Reflections on what you've Seen, and how you'll apply it to your own teaching.**

18. In observing the instructor, you saw some of her strengths and skills. Are there specific skills she displayed that you would like to be able to incorporate in to your teaching (e.g. organizational ability, ability to connect with students, ability to make class enjoyable, clarity of presentation, etc...)

19. In observing the instructor, you probably also saw some of her weaknesses, or saw some challenges that came up in the class. What did you learn from these moments that didn't go well?

20. Do you have any specific questions or areas you want advice on before moving forward to co-teaching?



## FEEDBACK ON OBSERVED SERIES

Trainee's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Classes: \_\_\_\_\_ Length of series: 4 Week    7 Week \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of students in class: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Class Dynamics**

1. Did the instructor seem warm, friendly, and interested in her students?

2. What icebreakers and group activities did instructor use to warm up the class and encourage group participation and interaction? Were they effective? What could be better?

3. Did most class members seem interested and attentive? (If not, why not? What strategies did the instructor use / could she use to gain their attention?)

4. Were questions encouraged? YES NO Did the class ask questions? YES NO  
Were they answered to the satisfaction of the person who asked? YES NO

5. Were class members interested in and supportive of the other students in the class? How was this facilitated by the instructor? If not, why not?

### **Teaching Methods / Skills**

1. What teaching methods did she use: lecture, group discussion, brainstorming, demonstrations, games, etc. Which ones worked well? What could be done better?

2. Did she teach in ways that were helpful to students with different learning styles? Give some suggestions for ways she could enhance this.

3. Did she seem to present information clearly, and in an organized fashion, so class could follow ideas and learn techniques? Please comment on strengths and weaknesses.

4. Did she show bias in her teaching? Describe the bias.

5. Did bias interfere with her effectiveness? YES NO If yes, how; if no, why not?

6. How did she bring in her own experience (with her births and other births she'd attended)? In what ways was that helpful? Were there times it was not helpful?

7. Any issues with distracting mannerisms? Talking too fast / too slow/too quiet, etc. Clothing issues? Anything that detracted from her teaching...

**Topics Covered:**

1. What pregnancy-related topics did she cover (exercise? Nutrition? Discomforts?) What went well with these presentations? Is there anything she needed to spend more time on / anything she could spend less time on?

2. How was her presentation of onset of labor, and early labor?

3. How much time was spent on strategies for coping with pain? Did couples demonstrate understanding and mastery of the skills? How did the instructor make herself understood? What could be better?

4. How much time was spent on hospital procedures / medical interventions? What went well? What could be better?

5. Comments on breastfeeding (if applicable) and newborn care presentations:

6. Was there enough time for practicing techniques, doing labor rehearsals, and other activities to reinforce knowledge?

What is your overall impression of this class? Do you feel that the instructor is ready to move on to teaching independently? If not, where do they need improvement, and what steps could they take? Please be specific in your summary.