



International Childbirth Education Association

Selection of a Teaching Site – ICEA Teaching Idea Sheet #14

Selection of a teaching site is an important aspect of establishing your practice as a childbirth educator. There are variables which impact the choice of a teaching site: the educator's means of employment, the client's needs, the space needed, and ease of accessibility may all affect site choice. For example, a religious based childbirth class may be better attended if taught in a church setting or a private home, whereas a basic skills class may be appropriate for a hospital meeting room.

Means of Employment

- **Employees of Birth Facilities:** Educators hired or under contract to birth centers, hospitals, clinics, private physicians or midwives will most likely teach in those facilities. Clients will be familiar with this environment and this can be an advantage. A shared philosophy of birth and continuity of care can be established when prenatal care, childbirth education, and birth occur in the same environment.
- **Independent Educators:** For the self-employed educator, choosing a site may take more thought and planning. This educator has more options available but must look at the following factors carefully.

Client Needs

While specific needs may vary, those attending childbirth education programs all have the following general needs.

- **Comfortable seating:** Padded chairs or bean bags could provide her that comfort. Since most classes spend some amount of time on the floor, the surface should be padded with mats, blankets, or carpeting.
- **Quiet environment:** Distractions that would keep the client from hearing the educator should be kept from the minimum.
- **Comfortable room temperature**
- **Access to Restrooms**

Educator Needs

- **Accessibility**
- **Travel Time:** the amount of time it takes to get to the site is a factor to consider. Think through traffic patterns leading to the site.
- **Safety:** Safety of the educator and the clients is important. Is there adequate exterior lighting? Can the building be secured once the educator and the clients have arrived? Will there be other groups who have access to the site at the same time? Are there security personnel who can escort the educator and clients to their cars following class?

- **Parking:** Is there adequate parking for the educator and the clients?
- **Audiovisual Equipment:** Does the site have the A/V equipment you will need? Televisions, DVD players and computers would be difficult to transport. Determine if the site has a wall large enough to project on if there is no projection screen.
- **Fees:** Determine if the site will require a fee for use. Some sites may be available for no charge.

Classroom Size

- **Number of Clients:** The size of the space will dictate how many students you can accommodate. Remember that extra space will be needed for floor practice.
- **Type of curriculum:** Specialty classes such as exercise or sibling classes may require extra space.
- **Types of Group Processes:** Determine whether the classroom size will facilitate group processes which require clients to move around the room, such as role play or graffiti boards, require more teaching space.
- **Teaching Aids Used:** Will the space accommodate any display of teaching aids? Is there secure space to store your teaching materials?



Course Content

Sometimes course content will dictate the teaching site. Matching course content with an appropriate teaching site will facilitate learning.

The following are a few examples:

- *Exercise classes* are effective in a fitness center where there are appropriate facilities and physical health is encouraged.
- *Mothers on Bed Rest* will have to be taught at home or in their hospital rooms.
- *Adoption Classes* can be held in private settings or at the adoption agency.
- *Grandparenting classes* could be held in senior centers, libraries, various businesses and associations.
- *New Mothers* will bring infants with them to new parent support groups. If a babysitter is employed, space for childcare will have to be considered

Examples of Teaching Sites

The possibilities for settings for childbirth education programs are endless.

The following are a few examples:

- Birth center classroom
- Hospital classroom
- Physician's or midwife's waiting area
- Church fellowship hall
- Community meeting room of a bank, shopping mall, public library or United Way center.
- YMCA
- Daycare center
- Private home – yours or someone else's

Considering the factors above, and narrow the field of choices that work for you.