

The Philosophy of Midwifery in Quebec

Midwifery is based on a respect for pregnancy and birth as a normal, physiological process, profoundly meaningful to a woman's life.

Midwives recognize birth as belonging to women and their families. The responsibility of health professionals is to offer women the respect and support they need to give birth safely, with power and dignity.

Midwives respect the diversity of women's needs and the variety of personal and cultural meanings that women, their families and communities attribute to pregnancy, birth and the experience of early parenting.

Midwifery is practised within the context of a personalized, non-authoritarian relationship, responding to a woman's social, cultural and emotional, as well as physical, needs. This relationship is built through continuity of care during pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

Midwives encourage women to make choices regarding the care and services they receive and about how these should be provided. Midwives see the responsibility for decision-making as being shared by a woman, her family (as defined by her) and her health professionals. Midwives recognize the woman as the final decision-maker.

Midwives respect a woman's right to choose her health professional and the place of birth, in accordance with the Standards of Midwifery Practice of *l'Ordre des sages-femmes du Québec*. Midwives are willing to attend birth in the woman's chosen setting, including her home.

Midwives consider the promotion of health to be essential to the childbearing cycle. They focus on preventative care and the judicious use of technology.

Midwives regard the interests of the mother and her unborn child as being connected and compatible. They believe that the best way to ensure the well-being of the mother and her baby is to focus their care on the mother.

Midwives encourage family and community support in order to help new families adapt.

Adopted by *l'Ordre des Sages-femmes du Québec* on March 29th, 2002.