

Letter of Agreement Describing Doula (Labor Support) Services, Limits and Fees

What is a doula?

As a doula, I accompany women in labor to help ensure a safe and satisfying birth experience. I have received education for the doula's role from The Academy of Certified Birth Educators and Labor Support Professionals. I draw on my knowledge and experience to provide emotional support, physical comfort, and as needed, communication with the staff to make sure that you have the information you need to make informed decisions as they arise in labor. I can provide reassurance and perspective to you and your partner, make suggestions for labor progress, and help with relaxation, massage, positioning, and other techniques for comfort. I am independent and self-employed. As your doula, I am working for you, not your caregiver or hospital.

Choosing a Doula.

I prefer to meet with you and your partner at least once before labor to become acquainted, to explore and discuss your priorities and any fears or concerns, and to plan how we might best work together. At that time, we can discuss fees. This meeting does not obligate you to use my service, but if you do select me, then I will want to become familiar with your Birth plan, including your preferences regarding pain management options and the use of medication. I also want to know your own best ways of coping with pain and fatigue and how you and your partner foresee working together.

I will also inform you of the times when I am unavailable for labor support. To cover those times, we can discuss the possibility of a back-up doula.

We may also decide on other meetings and will certainly want to remain in touch by phone.

When you are in labor.

I prefer that you call me when you think you are in labor, even if you do not yet need me. I can answer questions and make suggestions over the phone. We will decide if I should come right then or wait for further change. I usually need approximately one hour to get to you from the time you ask me to come. We will also decide where to meet - at your home, the hospital, or birth center. Except for extraordinary circumstances, I will remain with you throughout your labor and birth.

After birth.

I usually remain with you for one or two hours after birth, until you are comfortable and your family is ready for quiet time together. I can also help you with initial breastfeeding, if necessary.

I am available for phone contact to answer questions about the birth or your baby and would like to get together with you within one to two weeks to see how you are doing, to review the birth, admire your baby, and to get feedback from you about my role.

What doulas do not do.

As a doula, I do not:

–Perform clinical tasks, such as blood pressure, fetal heart checks, vaginal exams, and others. I am there to provide only physical comfort, emotional support, and advocacy.

– Make decisions for you. I will help you to get the information necessary to make an informed decision. I will also remind you if there is a departure from your Birth plan.

– Speak to the staff instead of you regarding matters where decisions are being made. I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, but your or your partner will speak on your behalf to the clinical staff.

Failure of a doula to provide service.

I will make every effort to provide the services described here. Sometimes this is impossible (for example, with a rapid labor). If my failure to attend your birth is due to error, illness or family emergency, there will be no charge for my services and I will refund my retaining fee. If it is due to circumstances beyond anyone’s control or your failure to call me, I will keep the retaining fee, but there will be no further charges.

Fees.

My fee for the services described here is _____, to be paid as follows:

_____ as a retainer fee, due when you select me as your doula.

_____ due within two weeks after birth.

I/We have read this letter describing the doula’s services and agree that it reflects the discussion we had with her.

Date_____

Client

Client’s Partner

Doula

Back-up doula (if available)