

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

What is a doula?

As a doula, I support women in labor to help ensure a safe and satisfying birth experience. I 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. As your doula, I am working for you, not your caregiver or hospital.

Before Labor

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. *This meeting does not obligate you to use my services*, but if you do select me, then I will want to become familiar with your Birth Plan, including your preferences regarding pain management and the use of medications. I also want to know your best ways of coping with pain and fatigue and how you and your partner foresee working together. We may also decide on other meetings and will certainly want to remain in touch by telephone.

I will also inform you of times when I am unavailable for labor support. To cover those times, I work with three other doulas to ensure that there will always be a back up available. You will have the opportunity to meet my back ups at our monthly "Meet the Doulas" meeting. Your signature of this agreement expresses consent for me to share your birth plan and intake form with your back up doula.

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 the birth center. Except for extraordinary circumstances, I or my back-up will remain with you throughout labor and birth. In most circumstances, you can expect that I or a back up will be with you within 2 hours of your call.

After birth

I will usually remain with you until you are comfortable and your family is ready for quiet time together. I will also help with initiation of 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, to admire your baby, and to get feedback from you about my role.

As a doula, I DO NOT:

- ❖ Perform clinical tasks, such as blood pressure, fetal heart checks, vaginal exams, and others. I am there only to provide physical comfort, emotional support and advocacy.
- ❖ Make decisions for you. I will help you get the information necessary to make an informed decision.
- ❖ Speak to staff instead of you regarding matters where decisions are being made. I will discuss your concerns with you and suggest options, but you 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 (by me or a back up) is due to my error, there will be no charge for my services and I will refund the retaining fee. If it is due to circumstances beyond anyone's control, I will keep the retaining fee, but there will be no further charges. If, for some reason, you do not call me or call me too late for me to get there in a reasonable amount of time, the full fee will be expected.

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 by your estimated due date.

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

Client

Client's Partner (not required)

Erin Luben, MPH, CD(DONA) - Doula