

Service Agreement for Birth + Postpartum Doula Support

In Due Time Doula Care Jenn Beiswenger, Doula

My role as your Doula:

I'm independently employed and hired directly by you and (if applicable) your partner. My goal as your *birth* doula is to help you have a satisfying birth as you define it; my role is to provide physical, emotional and informational support before and during your labour as well as encouraging communication with the staff at your birthplace (as applicable) to ensure that you have the information needed to make informed decisions regarding your baby's birth. As your *postpartum* doula, my goal is to help you navigate life in the early days and weeks after the birth of your baby; my role is to provide physical, emotional and informational support to you and your family after your baby is born, including providing references for needs that I cannot meet. All information you give to me I keep strictly confidential. I cannot - and do not - guarantee a specific outcome for your birth nor your postpartum period.

Initial Consultation:

The first meeting was a time for us to get to know each other and for each of us to decide if we want to work together. It's very important that you and your partner are comfortable with me and with my role in the birth. If you decide that we do not fit well, please don't hesitate to say so: there are lots of other doulas with whom you may have a better connection. If you do decide to retain me as your doula, you need to sign this agreement and return it to me. The retainer fee, which is 50% of the full fee, is due upon return of this agreement signed by you and your partner, if applicable. This retainer fee is required in order to reserve your due date on my calendar. Please provide a payment receipt for the retainer fee (e.g. screenshot of electronic payment; details below), along with the signed agreement. The remaining balance of the birth package will be due by 37 weeks; the remaining balance of the postpartum package will be due by the time of my first* visit postpartum (*the first visit of the postpartum package).

Prenatal Visits & Support:

We will meet 3-4 times before the birth to explore and discuss your priorities and preferences. During these meetings we will address any fears or concerns, clearly define the doula role, look at evidence-based information on the risks and benefits of common interventions and procedures used during childbirth, prepare and review birth plans, and plan how we might work best together. I will ask about the expectations you have of your partner and of me during the birth, plus the roles of anyone else that will be attending the birth. The more we explore these in advance, the better I will be able to support you.

Communication:

I am available to consult with you once the signed agreement is returned to me and receipt of payment of the retainer fee is confirmed. I encourage you to contact me with questions, concerns and any updates relating to the birth. Please let me know about your meetings with your midwife or doctor, so

that I am up to date with all relevant details throughout the pregnancy. You're welcome to email or message me at any time. You can ring me between the hours of 9am-5pm, Mon-Sat. If you would like to have a long conversation, please send me a message so that we can arrange a mutually convenient time. I will get back to you as soon as I can – usually within an hour or two, but definitely within 24 hours. It is important that we keep in contact with one another and communicate as best we can by keeping the channel of communication open and constant. My contact details: phone & WhatsApp: 0411 719 754, email: doulajennb@induetime.au, Facebook & Instagram: DoulaJennB.

On-Call Period & Labour:

I will be on call for you, for your labour, for the 2 weeks either side of your due date (3 weeks prior, in the case of multiples). During the on-call period, you can contact me at any time during the day or night, on any day! I will have my phone with me at all times. While you're welcome to *message* me overnight, I will only answer *telephone calls* during those hours. I may have other commitments during this on-call period but I will have alternate plans in place, should your labour begin and you require my presence. When you think that labour has begun, **ring** (don't message) me as soon as possible, even if you are not sure whether you are really in labour. (If I do not answer when you call, please leave a message and I will return your call as soon as is practicable.) The more notice I have, the better prepared I can be. Once you confirm that you are in labour, we will check in with each other every hour or so; please keep me updated with how you are feeling and any signs that the birth may be imminent. We will decide together if we should meet right away or wait for further change. If you feel that you are coping well and/or no longer need/want me there, that is completely fine; please send me a message to let me know. I will still be ready to come if you change your mind, but this will help me to plan my day. There is no refund if you decide not to have me at your birth. Once you decide that you want me there, barring any unforeseen circumstances (emergencies, traffic etc), I will be there within 1-2 hours. I will stay with you for the duration of your labour; if it is particularly long, I will take breaks as needed, so that I can be alert and most useful to you. If labour begins before 38 weeks (37 for multiples) or extends beyond 42 weeks, I will do everything I can to be there.

After Birth:

I will remain with you for 1-2 hours after birth, until you are comfortable and your newly born family is ready for quiet time together. Each situation and birth is different and my duties will vary depending on your needs.

Postpartum visits:

My standard birth doula package includes 2 visits after baby is born, which will consist of one visit about a week after birth, and the second another week or two later. My standard postpartum doula package consists of 24 hours of daytime support spread over six weeks, beginning on a mutually-agreeable date that you nominate, sometime within the first two months after birth. Before signing this agreement, we will have discussed the details of how much postnatal support you wish to arrange ahead of time (which will be reflected below), with the knowledge that more visits can be added, later on, if the need arises. They will incur an agreement of their own, but the scope will be the same as what is outlined here.

Postpartum doula terms of service:

A postpartum doula provides evidence-based information on things such as infant feeding, emotional and physical recovery from birth, mother-baby bonding, infant soothing, and basic newborn care. The postpartum doula is there to help a new family in those first days and weeks after bringing a new baby into the family; I will work with each family individually to determine your particular needs. Some of the postpartum services that I offer include:

- Birth debriefing
- Emotional & physical support and nurturing for the new mum
- Help with newborn care such as diapering, bathing, feeding, comforting
- Light housekeeping such as folding laundry, washing dishes, tidying up
- Light, healthy meal preparation and/or planning
- Infant massage instruction
- Sibling care
- Running errands
- Suggesting traditional methods of helping mum recover from birth, whether caesarean or vaginal, and observing for signs of infection and/or postpartum depression; educating mum and her partner, if applicable, on signs and symptoms regarding these issues
- Referrals to local resources such as, but not limited to, parenting classes, paediatricians, lactation support and other parenting support groups.

Mutual respect:

The doula-client relationship is based on mutual respect. This includes honest, open and caring communication. I will do everything I can to honour our relationship, and trust that you will, too. I reserve the right to withdraw my services if I feel that I am being misled or mistreated.

As a doula I DO NOT:

- Perform clinical tasks, such as taking blood pressure, fetal heart check, vaginal exams, recovery of vaginal tears or caesarean incisions
- Make decisions for you
- Speak to the staff on your behalf; I will discuss concerns with you and suggest options, as well as encourage you to voice your opinions
- 'Deliver' the baby – in some circumstances, labour progresses more quickly than anticipated: if your baby arrives unexpectedly on my watch at home or in the car, you or your partner will be responsible for the birth of your baby. I will help however I can! -and it is very important that you communicate directly with your care provider and take your direction from them. **I am not responsible for the birth of your baby or performing any clinical skills related to the birth of your baby.** I will not act as a midwife or doctor; I am not a trained medical professional.
- Act as a babysitter, housekeeper or groundskeeper

Failure to provide support:

Birth Doula Services: I will make every effort to provide the birth doula services described above.

If my failure to attend your birth is due to an error on your part during the period in which I am on call (37/38-42 weeks), including but not limited to failing to call me or deciding against having me present at the birth, full payment for my services is required pursuant to this contract.

If you decide against having me as your doula up to 37 weeks, you will not be required to pay the remaining balance. The retainer fee will not be refunded.

If for any reason you decide to have an elective caesarean section and that you do not want me to attend the birth, you will still be required to make full payment for my services pursuant to this contract. Please note that I can still support you through a caesarean birth: I will help you prepare for it and be available to you immediately prior to and following the birth. As I will not be with you during your labour, I will provide a 3rd postpartum visit at no additional cost.

If, during labour, you try calling me, are unable to get in touch with me within 2 hours from your first call, and your baby is born without me attending the birth, I will refund you the full amount; no fee will be payable whatsoever.

If I am unable to attend your birth due to a rapid labour (baby is born less than 2 hours after you call me and ask me to come), I will provide a 3rd postpartum visit as described above, at no additional cost. My full fee applies.

Any other circumstances out of my control that result in my absence at your birth will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, and may result in a refund of the retainer fee and/or remaining balance.

Postpartum Doula Services: I will make every effort to provide the postpartum doula services described above.

If the contract is initiated prior to the birth of the baby, it is the family's responsibility to contact me, to advise me that the baby has arrived so that services can be initiated. It is the family's responsibility to notify me in the event of the loss of a baby during pregnancy or birth, prior to the initiation of postpartum doula services.

I will make every effort to be with you at the agreed-upon times. If I am unable to come, whether for personal or extenuating circumstances – including attending another birth as a Birth Doula if I am on call – I will inform you as soon as I know that I will not be able to make it. In that instance, we will arrange an alternate mutually-agreeable day/time, or I will supply a substitute doula of my choosing to provide you with the promised support in my absence. I will inform you in advance if there is an overlap between my service period to you and my on-call period for another family as their Birth Doula, so that we're all on the same page.

Moving forward:

If you choose to hire me as your doula, the next steps are:

- Discuss this agreement with your partner, if applicable, and with me if you have any questions
- Notify me of your decision >> I will send you links to the digital agreement + intake form
- Pay the 50% non-refundable retainer fee to secure your position