

worksheets and discussion guides



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"There is no one right way to have and raise a baby.
Our doulas help as you find your way."

-Doulas of Baltimore founder Emily Pelton

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#### We are Emily Pelton and Deborah Bailey!

Since 2002, Doulas of Baltimore's founder Emily Pelton has been a source of support and knowledge for over a thousand new and growing families in the Baltimore area.

In 2018, Emily again expanded Doulas of Baltimore to partner with Deborah Bailey, a long-time doula (and mentee of Emily's!) and business owner.

Together, we have cultivated a talented group of 20 professional doulas who work with growing families across the metro Baltimore area.

#### Remember:

This guide should be used as a "choose your own adventure" style resource. Know that anything within these pages is optional and up to you! Print and use the worksheets or ignore them entirely. Our goal is to support you in the choices you make and prepare you to welcome your new baby home.

### Section 1:

# Before Pregnancy

What to consider before you concieve

# Often times forgotten, the most effective Postpartum planning begins before pregnancy.

Talking through these questions and details by yourself or with your chosen partner can be key in making decisions that serve you and your growing family well. Consider each of the following topics:

### **Parental Leave**

Explore what options you and/or your partner have for parental leave once your baby has arrived. How long can you take? How will it affect your finances? Do you need to save to fund your leave?

#### **Childcare**

Do you and/or your partner have a preference for an inhome provider such as a nanny or a family member vs a childcare center? When would you need care? When should you start your search and decide?

#### **Providers and Birth Locations**

What factors are important in a birthing location? Do your current providers deliver and would you want to continue care with them? Are there any risk factors or other considerations that could have implications on your prenatal care?

### **Parenting Topics**

It's important that even if you and your co-parent differ in parenting styles or preferences that all parties are considered and respected. Use our helpful Parenting Preferences Discussion Guide on the following page to help navigate the conversation.

Currently pregnant? You still have time! Walk through these topics now.



# Section 1:

# Before Pregnancy

# Parenting Discussion Guide

### **Parenting Opinions Guide**

Read each statement and record "A" for agree, "D" for disagree, and "?" for unsure. Use these statements as starters for your conversations. We recommend using this guide when both parents are in a calm, rested headspace and feeling open to discussion without overwhelming emotions. Remember: There are no wrong answers and no timeline, if you're feeling activated step away!

Statement	Partner A	Partner B
Having a baby would make me feel fulfilled.		
It is important for a couple to plan together how many children they will have.		
It is more important to be a good parent than to be a good partner.		
Children hold a relationship together.		
Having a career is more important than raising children.		
Adults give up their freedom once they have children.		
Couples should agree on discipline attitudes before having children.		
Anyone who wishes to be in the birth space has a right to be there.		
I wish for our baby to be breastfed.		
One parent should stay home with the baby while they're young.		

# Early Pregnancy

Questions to ask during your first trimester



### Who will watch the baby?

Securing infant care, particularly in a daycare center setting, can be stressful. It's never too early to get on a waitlist if there is a center you prefer or to begin the search for a quality nanny. If family will be watching baby, begin outlining important considerations for them.



### How will we announce the baby?

How and when will you share your news with friends and family members? Is it important to you to announce together? Will you wait a certain amount of time or would you prefer to share right away? Who will you involve in your pregnancy and in what capacity (ex. grandparents in delivery space)? Will you share on social media or keep it offline?



### Where will the baby live?

Will you room in with your baby, put them in a nursery, or both? Will baby gear have storage in your main living spaces? Where will you store larger items like strollers and car seats What car will you use most often as a family? Is the car seat you're choosing compatible?



### Who will provide prenatal care?

Ask your provider about what to expect in terms of future appointments. Which ones should your partner accompany you to? Will you see one provider for all of them or is it recommended to see different practitioners each time? Which approach do you prefer? Are testing, scans, etc all done in your office or do you need to go elsewhere?

# Early Pregnancy

### Childcare Preferences Worksheet

#### **Provider Preferences**

The baby will be cared for... (circle one)

In home by a nanny

In home by a family member

In a daycare center

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Location Preferences**

The daycare will be... (circle one)

Closer to home

Closer to work

Other:

### **Policy Preferences**

Pick Up/Drop Off (circle one)

Comfortable with rigid time limits

Prefer more flexibility

No preference

**Sick Days** (circle all that apply)

Required 24-Hour Fever Free

Required 24-Hour Symptom Free

Notify parents of outbreaks

### **Staff Training/Certifications**

(circle all that apply)

**CPR/AED Certified** 

Comfortable with teachers under 18

Prefer college educated or equivalent

### Days Off/Cancellations (circle one)

Prefer to mirror school district

Site-specific

### **Methodology Preferences**

The following methodologies are preferable:

Montessori

Waldorf

Play-Based

Outdoor/Nature-Centered

# Early Pregnancy

### How to use the Childcare Provider Scorecard

Most of these lines are self-explanatory, but we've defined and explained a few of our criteria. Print one of these scorecards for each provider you visit to refer to when making your final decision!

Hearing laughter and play with art at child's caring and child-

eve level indicates a Section 2: centric culture. Recommended ratio Early Pregnancy is at least 1 teacher to Childcare Provider Scorecard every 4 children under the age of 2 **Provider Name:** Provider Location: Number of Children per **Number of Teachers per** Classroom: Classroom: Parents allowed to drop in? Y / N Art at child's eye level? Y / N Heard laughter/play? Y / N Snacks/meals provided? Y / N If ves, which? Breakfast / Lunch / Snack Being prepared for Safety Measures include: unexpected drop-ins Overall Cleanliness Teacher Engagement Approved drop off/pick up is a great indicator \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ \$ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ list that children are well • One secured entry/exit cared for even when \* \* \* \* \* Background checks on no parents are teachers around. · CPR/AED training updated Sick Policy: regularly Closed circuit cameras The CDC recommends noting smells such as Make sure to note things you'll want to cleaners (indicating consider when you sit down to review all the regular sanitizing) or scorecards! This could include: monthly cost, off smells like old care style (Montessori, Nature-Centered, food/diapers (could etc), distance from home/work, etc. indicate neglect of

space)

# Early Pregnancy

Childcare Provider Scorecard

Number of Teachers per Classroom:		
Art at child's eye level? Y / N		
Heard laughter/play? Y / N		
Teacher Engagement		
Safety Measures		
* * * * *		

Overall Score

### Section 3:

# Mid-Pregnancy

Plans to make during your second trimester





### **Birth and Postpartum Doulas**

Especially if you are considering overnight newborn care, early in your second trimester is the ideal time to lock in support. Hiring a birth doula in your second trimester ensures time to cultivate and maximize that relationship.



#### Plan a Babymoon

Get away together, even if only for one night, to reconnect and recharge before your little one arrives.

### **Your Baby Registry**

What do you need for this baby? Start with friends and family members with younger children and your doula - what items are necessary, which will make your lives easier, and what can you skip all together?



### **Handle Large House Tasks**

Make the most of your second trimester energy burst and get started on things like rearranging your home to accommodate baby gadgets and painting/staging the nursery. Third trimester you will thank you for it!

### Section 3:

# Mid-Pregnancy

### 10 Essentials for Parents of Newborns

There are thousands of products marketed to parents... how do you know which ones are worth your money and which ones to pass on?

Leave it to the experts! Here's our top 10 must-have baby items for new parents based on our experience. We've ordered these from least expensive to most expensive, making sure to leave out anything we don't love.



# Bumco Baby Bum Brush

\$5.99

This clever, inexpensive essential keeps the diaper cream/ointment off your fingers on the baby bum where it belongs!



# Itzy Ritzy Sweetie Soothers

\$8.99 for two

The cutest colors and designs plus a straight nipple with a wide base to minimize interference with breastfeeding?

Yes please.



# Nose Frida Nasal Aspirator

\$14.99

Bulb syringes are gross (how do you clean that thing?). This is more comfortable for baby, more effective, and so much less gross!



# Muslin Burp Cloths

\$15-18

Because there are SO many uses for an absorbent cloth as a brand new parent! At least these also come in cute colors!

### Section 3:

# Mid-Pregnancy

# 10 Essentials for Parents of Newborns



Hatch Rest Go Portable Sound Machine

\$34.99

We love the Hatch for daily use. Now we have an on-the-go favorite sound machine too!



Summer Infant Gentle Support Tub

\$39

This tub is ideal for the tiniest babies all the way through the first year!



Ollie Swaddle

\$59

This is a tough one as there are SO many swaddles we love and lots of variables for which one we prefer! We've never had a client (or baby!) not LOVE the Ollie, so that one wins our recommendation!



Ubbi Diaper Pail

\$69.99

Hands down the best diaper pail out there!



**Solly Baby Wrap** 

\$70-85

Buttery soft and lightweight, this is our favorite baby carrier for the newborn stage!



Skip Hop Wipe Clean Changing Pad

\$80

Newborns create enough laundry - don't add washing a changing table cover to the pile!

# Late Pregnancy

The final countdown - your third trimester

### Fair warning: this will be the longest section of this guide!

There are many things that must be done before a baby arrives and some of them (like packing your birth bag) can't be completed until well into your pregnancy. We'll walk you through the following topics in this section:

### **Setting up Home Base**

Immediately postpartum, plan to spend the first week or two in and around your bed. Set yourself up for success by setting up well-stocked zones. Make the most of your first month home with everything set up in the optimal way, even if temporarily.

### Keeping your home running smoothly

Identify how your household tasks are currently split. Who takes out the trash? Who regularly cooks meals? Who does the dishes? Pull from your community to see who can help with these tasks while you're recovering.

### **Creating your resource list**

The best time to figure out resources is before a problem arises. Find who you'll call for newborn-related questions, healing-related questions, and mental health resources. Write them down and keep them nearby.

### **Easing the transition**

A new baby will always change the dynamics in a house. Consider how to make the transition easier for yourself and your partner, your pets, big siblings, and extended family members.

Let's take this step by step...



# Late Pregnancy

Setting up Home Base





### **Resting & Recovery Space**

Whether you're more comfortable on a couch or in your bed, having the essentials within reach will make staying put a much more enjoyable experience. We recommend having these key pieces to your space:

- Refillable water cup/bottle this is a great thing for your partner, visitors, or care team to check. Ensure this stays full with fresh water and that you're regularly drinking it.
   Flavor for your water optional, of course, but this can be helpful for when plain water gets boring.
- ☐ Healthy snack basket another excellent thing for your support people to check, consider having high protein and balanced snacks that you enjoy near you.
- Lip mask/chapstick
- ☐ Hair ties/clips to keep hair out of your face when gazing at your newest little love.
- ☐ Pain reliever of choice self explanatory! Keep this nearby.
- Books/coloring books non-digital distraction can be a welcome reprieve from screens if you're feeling antsy being still.
- Prenatal vitamins these are important to keep taking through postpartum healing and breastfeeding.
- ☐ A cozy robe super convenient for nursing and tossing over comfortable clothes when guests stop by.
- Extra long phone charger
- Baby station this should be stocked with all the essentials needed to care for your newborn including a changing or waterproof pad, clean diapers, wipes, diaper cream, clean clothes, burp rags, pacifiers if you're using them, and swaddles.

# Late Pregnancy

# Setting up Home Base



#### **Fully Stocked Bathroom**

Ensuring supplies are already nearby will make caring for your newly postpartum body that much more simple. We suggest having these supplies on hand:

- Pads/disposable underwear change these frequently while you're bleeding post birth.
- Peri bottle fill this with fresh, warm water each time you use the toilet and use to clean the labia and perineal area.
- Postpartum bottom spray/pads witch hazel-based sprays can offer some soothing, cooling effects.
- Breast pads if you choose to breastfeed, pads placed inside your bra can offer protection from milk leaks. Ensure these are single-use or freshly cleaned and change them regularly to protect your nipples from any bacteria build up.
- Pain relief yes, here too! Just in case.
- Other healing items you could consider would be a sitz bath (shallow bath that sits on your toilet), a stool softener, and ice packs meant for your underwear.

#### **Other Things to Consider:**

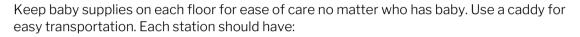
If possible, we recommend the bathroom you use be attached to the room you'll be healing in or as close as possible. The best case scenario, they're on the same floor. Minimizing stairs immediately post-birth is important to facilitate healing properly. This could mean opting to rest in a room on the main level for a period of time instead of a bedroom.

# Late Pregnancy

Setting up Home Base



### **Baby Care Station**



- Changing pad or waterproof mat
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Diaper cream
- Extra swaddles
- Burp cloth
- ☐ Change of clothes (for baby and shirt for each parent)
- Baby nail file + clippers
- Extra pacifiers



#### Safe Sleep Surfaces

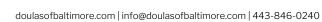
Keep a space that is firm, flat, and clear of any items to set baby down for sleep on each level.

Tip: consider a stroller that doubles as a bassinet for main levels to limit the number of items you need to keep in the main spaces.



### **Feeding Station**

Where will you feed baby? Would you be more comfortable in a chair or in bed? Will you use a certain feeding pillow? Will you be pumping? Consider setting up multiple feeding stations around the house with supplies in a basket nearby.



# Late Pregnancy

# Household Roles + Responsibilities

### **Delegation Guide**

For each household task/responsibility, note who currently oversees by marking an "x" in the column next to it. Then, in the "Assigned" column, note who will be overseeing the task while the birthing parent is recovering. Remember: visiting family members, a designated family member or friend, both of you, or your Postpartum Doula could go in that column!

Task	Birthing Parent	Partner	Assigned
Laundry			
Groceries			
Meal Planning			
Cooking			
Packing Lunches			
Vacuuming			
Dusting			
Cleaning Bathroom			
General Tidying			
Changing Bed Linens			
Major Cleaning (oven, windows, etc)			
Garbage/Recycling			

# Late Pregnancy

# Household Roles + Responsibilities

# **Delegation Guide (Cont.)**

Task	Birthing Parent	Partner	Assigned
Lawn Care			
Snow Removal			
Gardening			
Keeping Garage in Order			
Pool Upkeep			
Car Care and Maintenance			
Paying Bills			
Pet Care			
Planning Holidays			
Shopping for Home Essentials			
Overnight Baby Care			
Changing Diapers			
Feeding Baby			
Doctor's Appointments			



# Visiting Guide



# This is a sample — See next page for a fillable version!

Welcome Home, Baby			
Our Doula's Name is:			

Thank you for visiting us! We're so glad you came to support us as we welcome our new baby into our home.

### Helpful tips while you're visiting:

- Please wash hands upon arrival and use hand sanitizer while you're here!
- All visitors will need a mask to hold the baby, these are located at the door.
- We are a breastfeeding family and feed the baby any time they'd like.
- We are prioritizing the parent-baby bond and will ask that if the baby fusses they be handed back to one of us.
- Visiting hours are between 10a-3p and we ask that visits be kept under an hour.

### Tasks we'd love help with:

- Washing dishes
- Switching or folding laundry
- Refilling water cups
- Refilling snack stations

- Taking out trash
- Stocking diapers/baby care stations
- Walking the dogs
- Tidying living spaces

### **Important Contacts:**

Midwife/OB	NAME	(000)000-0000
Postpartum Doula	NAME	(000)000-0000
Lactation Consultant	NAME	(000)000-0000
IBCLC	NAME	(000)000-0000
Therapist	NAME	(000)000-0000

# Visiting Guide

Welcome Home, Baby		
Our Doula's Name is:		
Thank you for visiting us! We new baby into our home.	re so glad you came to support us as we welcome	our
Visiting Boundaries:		
Tasks Visitors Can Help With:		
Midwife/OB		
Postpartum Doula		
Lactation Consultant		
IBCLC		
Therapist	<del></del>	

# Easing the Transition

Bringing baby home as smoothly as possible

### Having a new baby changes everything!

Planning for those changes can create a smoother, less stressful time while you're learning about each other and growing together. In this section we're going to talk about easing the transition...





### For You, the Parents

The more you prepare before baby arrives, the better off you will be as a family unit. Preparing yourselves for parenthood is just as important as preparing your home, car, and childcare!



### **For Your Baby**

When you create a plan for helping your baby ease into the world gently, you create a low stress, high support environment.



#### For Siblings and Pets

Siblings and pets are important members of your immediate family unit too! Prepare them well and create a sense of safety and stability in the home.



#### **For Extended Family**

Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins... so many people to surround you with love! Create a strategy for sharing how they can best support and uplift you.

# Easing the Transition

# Parent Health Plan

**Healthy Sleep** 

The care and keeping of you as a parent is vital to the health and safety of your baby. Print a sheet for each caregiver and fill them out then use these as a guide to your planning conversation.

Remember: this is a plan, not reality! Make sure you check in with yourself and adjust as needed.

I am a		Night Owl	I would		To take overnight baby care while the other
		Morning Person	prefer		caregiver sleeps
		Either, as long as I get			To take the morning baby care while the
		enough sleep			other caregiver sleeps
					To split overnights
					Other:
The baby	anc	l "on duty" caregiver will sleep	:		
1110 011	uut				
Healthy	Se	lf			
<b>-</b> .			_		
Inese	thin	gs make me feel cared for:		Ines	se things recharge my batteries:
	_	I will make time every day to ca	uro for and	tono	I to mysalf
		I understand that the birthing p especially right after the baby h			ctra rest and recovery time,

# Easing the Transition

Parent Health Plan (Cont.)

**Healthy Connection** 

Note: this page is meant for nurturing discussion and support between birthing people and their partners but can be used for anyone supporting the new parent(s)!

When things get difficult I tend to	Go inward and get quiet
	Complain loudly and have a short fuse
	Meltdown in some way
	Other:
A nonverbal cue that I need support is	Sudden change in appetite
	Avoiding eye contact
	Opting out of showers/self care tasks
	Noticeable forgetfulness
These are things you could do to make me feel supported:	

### **Daily Check in Questions:**

- 1. What can I do for you?
- 2. What went well today?
- 3. What was a struggle today?
- 4. What could be more helpful tomorrow?
- 5. What needs to be done tomorrow to ensure everything is running smoothly?

# Easing the Transition

# For your baby

In the early days easing the transition for your baby really means setting caregivers up to care for the baby more easily. Let's break down a few of the most important things to think about:

### **Splitting Responsibilities**

Who does what? Bathing, laundry, feeding, napping, diaper changes... there are many tasks that come along with a new baby. When you're considering who will be responsible for which, keep in mind "divide and conquer." It's important for your family to bond and run well, and the most effective way to ensure that is done is to divide tasks instead of doing everything together.

Also consider feeding - will you be breastfeeding? This is obviously a task for one parent. There will be times for both of you to feed baby, but in the early days it's important not to overcomplicate the breastfeeding relationship. Consider taking a couple of weeks to get it down well and then introducing the pump and/or a bottle for other people to feed the baby.

### **Tapping in help**

Schedule times where other adults will help with baby care. Ensure these are trusted family members or a doula who has experience with newborns. Setting a schedule will help make sure someone else is there without you needing to call them in when you are feeling overwhelmed or tired.

#### Extra care in the first weeks

The first weeks of baby's life will probably seem a bit more labor intensive, as the baby will need to be brought to the birthing parent as they're resting and healing. This could include partner getting up to retrieve the baby from their sleep space and passing them off, especially post c-section when the birthing parent should not be lifting anything.

Fear not! This will subside as time goes on and healing takes place.



# Easing the Transition

# For siblings + pets

Help transition your first babies and fur babies into their new role as big siblings with a little bit of forethought and some daily effort.



#### **Big Siblings**

- Maintaining routine whether they attend preschool, daycare, spend time with grandparents, or are in school already, ensure that the routine established for the older sibling stays in tact to ensure a sense of normalcy for them.
- We recommend getting undivided one on one time 10-15 minutes twice a day with each older sibling. This could look like reading a book, taking a walk, or playing in the yard together.
- Know you'll use the same voice for talking with the baby that you usually use for them.
- This is where "divide and conquer" comes back into play. Establish who will be responsible for what care tasks for older siblings consider lunches, naptime, bathing, and bedtime routine



### **Fur Siblings**

- While a bit easier than maintaining a human's routine, pets have their own set routines that is is important to follow in order to avoid undue stress on them.
   Consider adjusting anything that might shift while the birthing parent is healing a few weeks prior to baby's arrival. This might include who walks the dog or who takes them to the park.
- Who will be in charge of routine care? The easy maintenance tasks, such as scooping cat litter and feeding/watering pets, are great things to hand off to helpful visitors when they come over.
- In case of emergency who is responsible for the pets? Make sure to note their number on your resource list for ease of contacting them.

# Easing the Transition

For Extended Family (and Visitors!)

#### Loved ones around you will likely want to meet your baby as soon as possible!

Remember: YOU set when "possible" is. The most important thing in your baby's early days is to form a secure bond to their caregivers (parents!) in a supported environment. Everything else is secondary.

#### **Boundaries to Consider**

- What times should visitors come by?
- Are you comfortable with short notice or would you prefer a scheduled visit?
- How long should visitors stay? Are there visitors you'd feel comfortable with a longer visit vs others?
- Will you be breastfeeding? Do you feel comfortable doing so in front of other people?
- Are there extended family members who may want to be entertained vs a helpful visit?
- Should visitors mask to meet the baby?
- Who will be coordinating visits?

# **Easy Boundary Setting:** Send a Text!

Visits without communication can become a stressful disaster for everyone involved. Head the chaos off at the pass with a quick text message to family and friends from you and/or your partner.

Tip: keep the text message short enough to be read but make sure to include important info such as who to contact, what hours you're welcoming visitors, and any illness protocol (ex: please stay home if you're coughing, wear a mask, etc).

**Boundaries** are an invitation for those around you to love you loudly and in real life. Extend the invite!

#### Hi Family!

We're so excited for you to meet our new baby! During this time we're focusing on rest and recovery so we have a few things we'd love to ask:

We'll be having visitors over for short visits between 10am-3pm.

Please text PARTNER B to set up a visit time, PARTNER A will probably be sleeping.

Please wash hands upon arrival and don't forget to wear a mask since it is cold & flu season!

### Section 6:

# What's next? Further support for your growing family

Congratulations! You've taken a huge first step toward achieving the restful postpartum experience you deserve!

If some of the topics or phrases you've come across during this process feel overwhelming, you're not alone. We hear from hundreds of new families how inundated they feel by the massive amounts of information regarding pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting. It can be a lot to sift through the information available and figure out what actually appeals to your family.

The good news is that you don't have to do it alone! Doulas of Baltimore can help ease that burden.

We offer straightforward, evidence-based childbirth and parenting education classes in small group workshops (both virtually and in-person) as well as customizable, private, inhome education. Armed with resources, knowledge, and a toolkit of decision-making skills, you, and your partner, can go confidently into your parenting experience.

Looking for a bit more personalized support throughout your journey? Our team of professional postpartum doulas is ready to help. Hiring your own dedicated postpartum doula is very much like that steadfast friend who isn't afraid to ask the hard questions, always knows where to find the answers, brings you water and a snack while you're feeding the baby, and provides unconditional validation and reassurance... who also happens to be an expert on pregnancy, birth, and babies!

Visit our website today to schedule a complimentary phone consultation to find out what support is right for your family: https://doulasofbaltimore.com/contact

We look forward to supporting you on your journey!



