Ethereal

CHILDCARE & DOULA SERVICES

Your Childbirth Education Guide

Prepare. Understand. Welcome your baby with confidence.

Prepared for: _____

Due date: _____

Lakayla Phillips, Full-Spectrum Doula · Serving Arlington & DFW

SAMPLE PAGE

WELCOME

A note before we begin

Congratulations, and welcome. Whether this is your first baby or your fourth, the weeks before birth are full of questions, and it is completely normal to feel excited, nervous, and everything in between.

I created this guide to go with your childbirth education course so you have something in your hands to read, mark up, and return to. Every section is written to help you feel **informed, calm, and confident**. You will find plain-language explanations of how labor works, honest answers to common fears, a full section on vaginal tears and healing, feeding guidance for breastfeeding and formula, newborn basics, a readiness checklist, and a hospital bag list with real product ideas.

How to use this guide

- **Read it in order or jump around.** Start with the section that worries you most.
- **Write in it.** Worksheets, checklists, and notes pages are there for you to fill in. It is yours to print and edit.
- **Bring it to our sessions and your appointments.** Your questions are the most important part.
- **Share it with your partner.** Birth is a team effort, and everyone who will be in the room benefits from reading it.

Important disclaimer

This guide is provided by Ethereal Childcare & Doula Services LLC for **general educational and informational purposes only. It is not medical advice**, and it is not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Lakayla Phillips is a doula, not a physician, nurse, midwife, or lactation consultant, and does not provide medical care. Reading this guide does not create a provider-patient relationship.

Always seek the advice of your doctor, midwife, or other qualified health provider with any questions about your health, pregnancy, birth, or your baby, and before starting or changing any treatment, product, or practice mentioned here. **Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read in this guide.**

Information reflects general guidance available when this guide was written and may change. Every pregnancy and every baby is different. Product names are examples only, not endorsements. No outcomes are guaranteed, and to the fullest extent permitted by law, Ethereal Childcare & Doula Services LLC and its owner are not liable for any loss or harm arising from use of this guide.

If you think you may have a medical emergency, call 911 or your local emergency number right away.

With care,

Lakayla Phillips

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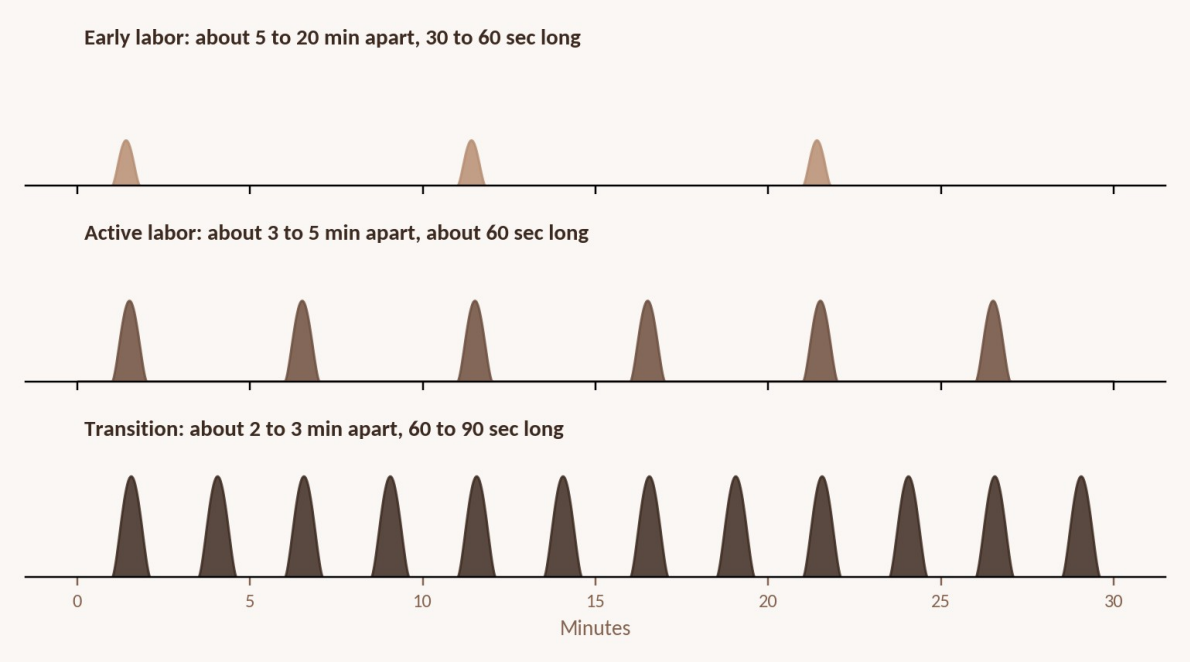
This guide is yours to edit and print. If you add or remove pages, update the page numbers on this list by hand.

Timing contractions

Time from the **start of one contraction to the start of the next** (that is how far apart they are), and note how long each one lasts. Early on, you can rest, eat, shower, and stay home. As labor builds, contractions grow longer, stronger, and closer together.



The 5-1-1 guideline

A common rule of thumb for when to call your provider: contractions **5 minutes apart**, each lasting **1 minute**, for at least **1 hour**. Your provider may give you different instructions based on your history, how far you live from the hospital, or whether this is a repeat birth. Ask at your next visit and write it here:

Call when: _____

Contraction log

Time started	How long it lasted	Minutes since last started	How it felt / what helped

Tool	How it can help	Tips
Water	Warm water can relax the body and ease tension.	A shower or tub, if your facility offers it and your provider approves.
Counter-pressure and massage	Firm pressure on the lower back or hips can relieve back labor.	Show your partner exactly where and how hard. Practice together.
Heat and cold	Warm compresses relax muscles. Cool cloths refresh you.	Keep the washcloth and warm pack handy.
Birth ball	Let's you move your hips and take weight off your pelvis.	Ask whether you can bring your own.
Calming space	Feeling safe helps labor progress.	Dim lights, music you love, fewer interruptions, a scent you enjoy.
Affirmations	Words steady the mind when labor feels hard.	Pick two or three phrases and write them down so your partner can say them to you.

My top 3 comfort measures

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Pain relief options: a fair look

There is no "right" way to give birth. Many people choose a mix of comfort measures and medication. Knowing your options ahead of time means you can make decisions in the moment without fear or pressure.

Option	What it is	Things to know	Good to ask
Epidural	Medicine placed near the spinal cord to numb the lower body while you stay awake.	Usually very effective. May cause low blood pressure, itching, or a fever, and may limit movement. Research has not found that it causes cesareans.	When can I get one? Can I change positions with it?
Nitrous oxide	A gas you breathe through a mask that you control yourself.	Takes the edge off rather than removing pain. Wears off quickly. Not offered everywhere.	Is it available at my birth place?
IV pain medication	Medicine given through an IV for short-term relief.	May cause drowsiness. Timing matters because it can affect the baby if given close to birth.	How close to delivery is too close?
Natural coping	Breathing, movement, water, massage, hypnobirthing, and continuous support.	Works best with preparation and a strong support team. You can still choose medication later.	What tools can I use here?

PART 4

Feeding Your Baby

Breastfeeding, formula, or a mix of both: what matters most is that your baby is fed and you are supported.

Why breastfeeding matters

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends **exclusive breastfeeding for about the first 6 months**, then continued breastfeeding alongside solid foods, for 2 years or beyond for as long as you and your baby both wish. The World Health Organization, the CDC, and ACOG give the same recommendation. [1] [2][3]

Possible benefits for your baby	Possible benefits for you
Lower risk of ear, respiratory, and stomach infections, and lower risk of SIDS [2]	Lower risk of breast and ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and high blood pressure [1]
Colostrum, the first milk, is rich in antibodies and easy to digest	Hormones that help the uterus return to size and support bonding
Milk that adapts to your baby's needs as they grow	Convenient and free, with no bottles to prepare when you are nursing

A kind reminder

Breastfeeding is natural, but it is also a **learned skill** that can be hard at first. Needing help does not mean you are failing. And if breastfeeding is not possible or not right for you, formula is a safe, well-regulated way to feed your baby (see the next pages). Your worth as a parent is never measured by how you feed your baby.

Getting started

- **Skin-to-skin in the first hour** helps your baby find the breast and start feeding.
- **Feed often.** Newborns usually feed 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. Feed on cues rather than the clock.
- **Know the early hunger cues:** rooting, bringing hands to mouth, lip smacking, and stirring. Crying is a late cue.
- **Watch for a deep latch:** wide-open mouth, lips turned out, chin touching the breast, and visible swallowing. It should feel like a tug, not a pinch.
- **Try different positions:** cradle, cross-cradle, football (clutch), side-lying, and laid-back nursing.
- **Ask for help early.** A lactation consultant (IBCLC) at the hospital can check your latch before you go home.

PART 6

Self-Care and Being Present

You are not only caring for a baby. You are becoming a parent, and you deserve care too.

The weeks after birth are often called the **fourth trimester**. Your body is healing, your hormones are shifting, sleep is scarce, and your whole life is rearranging. It is also fleeting. Taking care of yourself is not selfish. It is how you have the energy to care for your baby and to actually enjoy this stage.



Pillar	Small ways to practice it
Rest	Sleep when you can, even if it is not at night. Say yes to naps. Lower your housework standards for a while. Protect one block of rest each day.
Nourish	Keep easy snacks and a big water bottle where you feed baby. Accept meals from friends. Eat protein and iron-rich foods, and keep taking your prenatal vitamin if advised.
Move	Short, gentle walks and sunshine lift mood. Wait for your provider's okay before exercise and be patient with your pelvic floor.
Connect	Text a friend, join a parent group, or call your doula. Isolation makes everything harder.
Ask for help	Write down tasks people can take, like laundry, meals, errands, or holding baby so you can shower. Most people want to help and are waiting to be asked.
Be present	Put the phone down for a feed. Notice baby's toes, smell, and sounds. Take a photo of an ordinary moment. Say out loud one thing that went well today.

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PART 7

Your Readiness Checklist

Use this from about 34 to 36 weeks, or sooner if you are due soon. Check items off as you go.

Birth team and paperwork

- ☐ Hospital or birth center **pre-registered**
- ☐ Insurance card and ID in one place
- ☐ **Birth preferences** printed (3 copies)
- ☐ Doula, provider, and pediatrician numbers saved
- ☐ Know **when to call** your provider (5-1-1 or your own guidance)
- ☐ Pediatrician chosen and first visit planned
- ☐ Paid parental leave and work paperwork submitted
- ☐ Group B strep result and prenatal records noted

Home and baby

- ☐ **Car seat** installed and checked by a certified technician
- ☐ Safe sleep space set up (firm, flat, empty)
- ☐ Newborn diapers, wipes, and diaper cream ready
- ☐ 2 to 3 weeks of easy-to-grab **baby clothes** washed
- ☐ Digital rectal thermometer and nasal aspirator
- ☐ Burp cloths, swaddles, and a few muslin blankets
- ☐ Baby's first-aid basics and a list of when to call
- ☐ Pet and older-child care plans made

Feeding

- ☐ Decided how I would like to feed baby, and know I can change my mind
- ☐ Nursing bras, nursing pads, and nipple cream if breastfeeding
- ☐ Lactation consultant number saved
- ☐ If bottle feeding: bottles, nipples, and a plan for formula
- ☐ Breast pump from insurance ordered if wanted
- ☐ Water bottle and snack basket at my feeding spot

Postpartum plan

- ☐ Freezer meals or a meal train set up
- ☐ Peri bottle, pads, and recovery supplies ready
- ☐ Stool softener discussed with my provider
- ☐ Support list filled in (see Self-Care section)
- ☐ Visitor boundaries talked about with family
- ☐ Postpartum doula or help scheduled, if desired
- ☐ Partner leave and roles discussed
- ☐ Therapy or mental health contact saved

The week before

- ☐ Hospital bag and baby's going-home outfit packed
- ☐ Gas tank over half, and the route to the hospital known
- ☐ Rest, hydrate, and be kind to yourself

SAMPLE PAGE

PART 8

Hospital Bag List

Pack by about 36 weeks. Ask your hospital what they already provide before you buy.

Product names are examples to make shopping easier, not endorsements. Choose what fits your needs, budget, and your provider's advice.

For you

Item	Product idea	Why
Documents	ID, insurance card, birth preferences	Check in smoothly
Phone and long charger	Extra-long 6 to 10 ft charging cable (for example, Anker)	Outlets are often far from the bed
Robe or gown, and slippers	Your own lightweight robe, non-slip socks	Comfort and modesty
Nursing bra	Kindred Bravely Sublime Hands-Free Pumping & Nursing Bra	Soft, supportive, easy to nurse in
Nipple care	Lansinoh HPA Lanolin, Lansinoh Soothies Gel Pads	Soothes sore nipples
Nursing pads	Lansinoh Stay Dry Disposable Nursing Pads	Absorb leaks
Postpartum underwear	Frida Mom Disposable Postpartum Underwear	Soft and stretchy
Perineal care	Frida Mom Upside Down Peri Bottle, Instant Ice Maxi Pads, Tucks pads	Comfort while healing
Lip balm and hair ties	Burt's Bees Beeswax Lip Balm	Dry air and long hours
Pillow and blanket	Your own, in a bright pillowcase	Feels like home
Snacks and drinks	Honey sticks, applesauce pouches, coconut water, a bottle with a straw	Ask first if eating is allowed in labor
Toiletries and going-home outfit	Loose, comfortable clothes in a size you wore around 6 months pregnant	You will still look pregnant

Want the full workbook?

This sample shows just a few pages of Your Childbirth Education Guide.

The complete 32-page guide comes with every Ethereal Birth Doula package and the private Childbirth Education course, where we go through it together. It covers labor and birth, birth fears, healing, feeding, newborn care, self-care, a readiness checklist, and a hospital bag list.

Book a free consultation

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