

Postpartum Plan for the _____ Family

1. **Support for rest in the early days:** During the days and early weeks following the birth of a baby, new parents need extra help to ensure that they can meet their needs for sleep. Support during the night, naps, and tag-team parenting can all be effective tools for meeting these important needs. Note that there are spaces for you to fill out more than one name for each time slot. This is because you will need more than one person to meet this important need. Remember, the goal is to schedule this type of support for several weeks. Potential sources of help are family members, friends, doulas, and members of your religious and/or community groups. If you identify gaps here, now is the time to strategize on how you will still address this important need.

- **The following people are available to help us rest:**

- _____ is available to help during the day
- _____ is available to help during the day
- _____ is available to help during the day
- _____ is available to help during the evening
- _____ is available to help during the evening
- _____ is available to help during the evening
- _____ is available to help during the night
- _____ is available to help during the night
- _____ is available to help during the night

2. **The need to have a group of friends who are also parents of young babies.** Common sense and life experience tell us that having someone to talk to who can empathize with our experiences normalizes our problems and makes them more bearable. Research confirms this concept. These friends will enhance your life, rather than replace your existing support network. If you cannot identify several peers with young babies, then strategize on where you might find these friends. Suggestions include childbirth education classes, prenatal/postnatal fitness classes, breastfeeding support groups, common friends, “mommy’s day out” programs, on-line discussion groups, and houses of worship.

- **The following people are friends or neighbors with babies of their own:**

- **Our plan for building a support network of friends who also have young babies includes the following resources:**

3. **Nutritious meals and adequate hydration are very important**, and not all that difficult to plan. Friends, family members, neighbors, coworkers, and friends through religious affiliations are often great sources of food. It's ok and even advisable to let people know what kinds of meals you would like—it is even all right to ask for things like french toast or pancakes. This way you will be able to enjoy the food rather than having things you do not like or eating 15 lasagnas in 3 weeks. Parents can also plan ahead by “double batching” meals that they prepare in the weeks before the birth of the baby. Plan on it being as much as a couple months before you will really want to start buckling down and preparing meals on a daily basis.

- **We would like to have food prepared and available for the first _____ weeks after the birth of our baby.**
- **The following are people who will be willing to bring us food if we ask, and we will set this up well-ahead of the baby's birth:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- **We will also prepare _____ frozen dishes before the birth.**
- **Nutritious and affordable take-out or delivery options include:**

4. **The need for knowledgeable, empowering breastfeeding support:** Breastfeeding is a natural process, but it does not always come naturally. Few new or experienced mothers are blessed with a community of knowledgeable women around them to provide education, screening, support and guidance on breastfeeding during the several weeks that it takes to have breastfeeding well established. However, we know that the absence of these important people may lead to breastfeeding difficulties: painful nipples, inadequate milk supply, slow weight gain, fussy babies, and a sense of isolation. Some women think that these problems are a normal part of early breastfeeding, but they are not. Women who have appropriate support are able to avoid most difficulties. If your goal is to breastfeed, take the steps that will ensure your success—line up your support!

- **The following friends or relatives are supportive of my breastfeeding, and I can count on them to cheer me on:**

- _____
- _____
- _____

- **The following people in my life are not only supportive, they have up-to-date information on breastfeeding and will be able to answer questions and make recommendations that will help me to breastfeed successfully:**
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

- **Local DONA postpartum doulas who will come to my home and help with successful breastfeeding initiation are:**
 - _____
 - _____

- **Local board certified lactation consultants who will help me with any breastfeeding challenges I may face are:**
 - _____
 - _____

- **Local breastfeeding support groups where I will find both emotional support and quality breastfeeding support information are:**
 - _____
 - _____

5. **Support for older siblings:** Older children will experience a time of transition following the addition of a newborn to the family. Welcoming the baby with love while maintaining a loving, nurturing relationship with older children is the goal of all parents. Planning ahead to ensure that older children have time to welcome their new sibling but still have special time with their parents is an important step in ensuring a smooth transition.

- **Needs of our older children might include:**

- **People who will be able to spend quality time with our children, as well as drive them to school, daycare, and activities include:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- **Times of day, rituals, or special activities that we want to share with our older children include:**

- **Specific strategies that we plan to use to lovingly blend this new baby in with our existing family include:**

6. **Mommy and Daddy time: maintaining our sense of “self” and “us”:** The time spent together as a family is priceless. Parents also need time to continue to develop their own interests, as well as their relationship as a couple. With a new baby, this does not happen as easily or spontaneously as we would hope. Many parents find that occasional “me and “us” time helps them to be more loving and better bonded with their baby, and as a family unit as a whole. Plan your support needs many weeks and even months ahead.

- **Loving, responsible friends and family members who I know would be willing to provide occasional childcare include:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- **Loving, responsible professional childcare providers include:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- **Activities and “breathers” that help me to feel nurtured, rested, and energized when I return home include:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- **Activities and “breathers” that will help us to connect and strengthen our bond as a couple include:**

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____