

# Is Your Doula Practice Mother-Friendly?

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Are you up-to-date with the latest research? Does the information you provide your clients empower them to make informed decisions about their care and the care of their babies? Following is a list of questions based on the user-friendly version of the Mother-Friendly Childbirth Initiative, *Having A Baby? Ten Questions To Ask*.

## I. Who can be with me during labor and birth? Do you—

- have back-up services so the mother is assured she will be attended by a doula?..... Y/N
- provide continuous labor support?..... Y/N
- inform your clients of the availability of midwives?..... Y/N
- provide referral sources for midwives and other doulas? Y/N

## II. What happens during a normal labor and birth in your setting? Do you—

- provide evidence-based information about interventions? Y/N
- examine your own belief systems for preferences and bias?Y/N
- offer information about birth plans?..... Y/N
- provide the mother with referral sources if you cannot support the mother in her birth plan?..... Y/N
- teach parents how to ask questions of the medical staff? Y/N
- encourage the mother to find out how often certain procedures are done in her birth setting?..... Y/N
- provide information on mother-friendly birth sites?..... Y/N
- offer information about vaginal birth after cesarean(s)?.. Y/N

## III. How do you allow for differences in culture and beliefs? Do you—

- inquire about the mother's cultural preferences for her birth?..... Y/N
- encourage the mother to personalize her birth plan with respect to cultural variations?..... Y/N
- increase your knowledge in cultural variations of birth by reading, attending conferences, etc.?..... Y/N
- help the mother educate her care providers about her cultural preferences?..... Y/N

## IV. Can I walk and move around during labor? What position do you suggest for birth? Do you—

- use labor rehearsal and birth planning to educate women about their choices in positions for labor and birth?..... Y/N
- encourage the discussion of positions the mother prefers between the mother and her care provider?..... Y/N
- work with the staff in helping the mother change positions? Y/N
- remind the mother to change positions in labor?..... Y/N

## V. How do you make sure everything goes smoothly when my nurse, doctor, midwife or agency need to work with each other? Do you—

- communicate with the mother's care provider(s) before, during and after the birth?..... Y/N
- offer a list of community resources?..... Y/N
- help the mother find out if there is a specific plan for communication among her caregivers?..... Y/N

## VI. What things do you normally do to a woman in labor? Do you—

- encourage practices and procedures which are supported by scientific evidence?..... Y/N
- give the mother resources for finding research to support her desires in labor, birth, postpartum and parenting?.... Y/N
- encourage the mother to discuss evidence-based practices with her care providers?..... Y/N

## VII. How do you help mothers stay as comfortable as they can be? Besides drugs, how do you help mothers relieve the pain of labor? Do you—

- educate the mother in non-pharmacological methods of pain relief?..... Y/N
- educate the mother about the risks and benefits of pharmacological methods of pain relief?..... Y/N
- educate the mother in ways to communicate her preferences for pain relief?..... Y/N
- attempt to learn what barriers the woman may have to comfort measures?..... Y/N
- respect the mother's preferences in comfort measures?... Y/N

## VIII. What if my baby is born early or has special problems? Do you—

- work with the staff to see that the mother and family touch, hold, breastfeed and care for her baby as much as she can?..... Y/N

## IX. Do you circumcise baby boys? Do you—

- encourage the mother to seek information on circumcision? Y/N
- educate the mother in the care of the intact penis?..... Y/N

## X. How do you help mothers who want to breastfeed? Do you—

- educate the mother in the benefits of breastfeeding and breastfeeding techniques?..... Y/N
- encourage the mother to start breastfeeding within 1 hour after birth?..... Y/N
- encourage the mother to ask for non-separation from her baby after birth?..... Y/N
- teach methods for promoting milk production if the mother and baby have to be separated?..... Y/N
- offer information on the risks of supplemental feeding with artificial milk?..... Y/N
- encourage the mother to seek the option of rooming-in? Y/N
- educate the mother in demand versus scheduled feedings? Y/N
- educate the mother to avoid the use of pacifiers?..... Y/N
- encourage the mother to ask for a written policy on breastfeeding at the site she has chosen for birth?..... Y/N
- encourage the formation of breastfeeding support groups and give resources for existing ones?..... Y/N
- provide resources for postpartum support services which are baby-friendly?..... Y/N
- educate yourself in updated information on breastfeeding? Y/N

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