



Sharing your

Birth &
Parenthood

Story



EMPOWER

em•pow•er

(verb) to give someone the power to do something

Journal Prompts

Use some of the following journaling prompts to help discuss each aspect of your journey to parenthood. You can answer as many or as few questions as you like, you can use the questions as prompts to expand on. You can ignore all the questions and write without prompts, you can choose to tell us about certain aspects of your journey to parenthood and not others. This is your story to tell, there's no right or wrong way to tell it.

JOURNEY TO PARENTHOOD

Start with telling us about who is in your whānau, chosen or otherwise and who was involved in your journey to parenthood.

- How did you decide you were ready to grow your family?
- Did you need medical or legal support to grow your family? What did this process involve?
- Were these professionals familiar with how to care for your family and your needs?
- Did you know anybody else who had started their family in a similar way to yours?
- How did you find out you were going to have a baby?
- What feelings did this initial news bring up?
- Who did you first tell?
- Were you supported by friends & family?
- How did you prepare to bring a child into your life?
- What were the last few days & weeks before your child came into your life like?



MEETING YOUR TAMAITI/TAMARIKI, CHILD/CHILDREN

- What were the last few moments before you met your child like?
- Tell us about the first moment you saw your child. What were your first thoughts or feelings?
- What were the first words you spoke to your child?
- Who did you first tell that your child was with you?
- Describe the first few moments/minutes/hours after meeting your child for the first time.
- Describe the first night you spent with your child at home: how did you feel? How did your co-parent(s) feel?

FEEDING

- If your child was a baby when they came into your life, how did you choose to feed them?
- Who was involved in feeding your child? What was this process like?
- How did you decide how to feed your child?

EMOTIONS

- What was the hardest part of your journey to parenthood?
- What has been the biggest joy of bringing a child into your family?
- Reflecting on the first few months/year of life with your child, what has changed? What has stayed the same?
- Tell us about your little human: what kind of personality do they have, what funny things do they do? How do they make your heart soar?

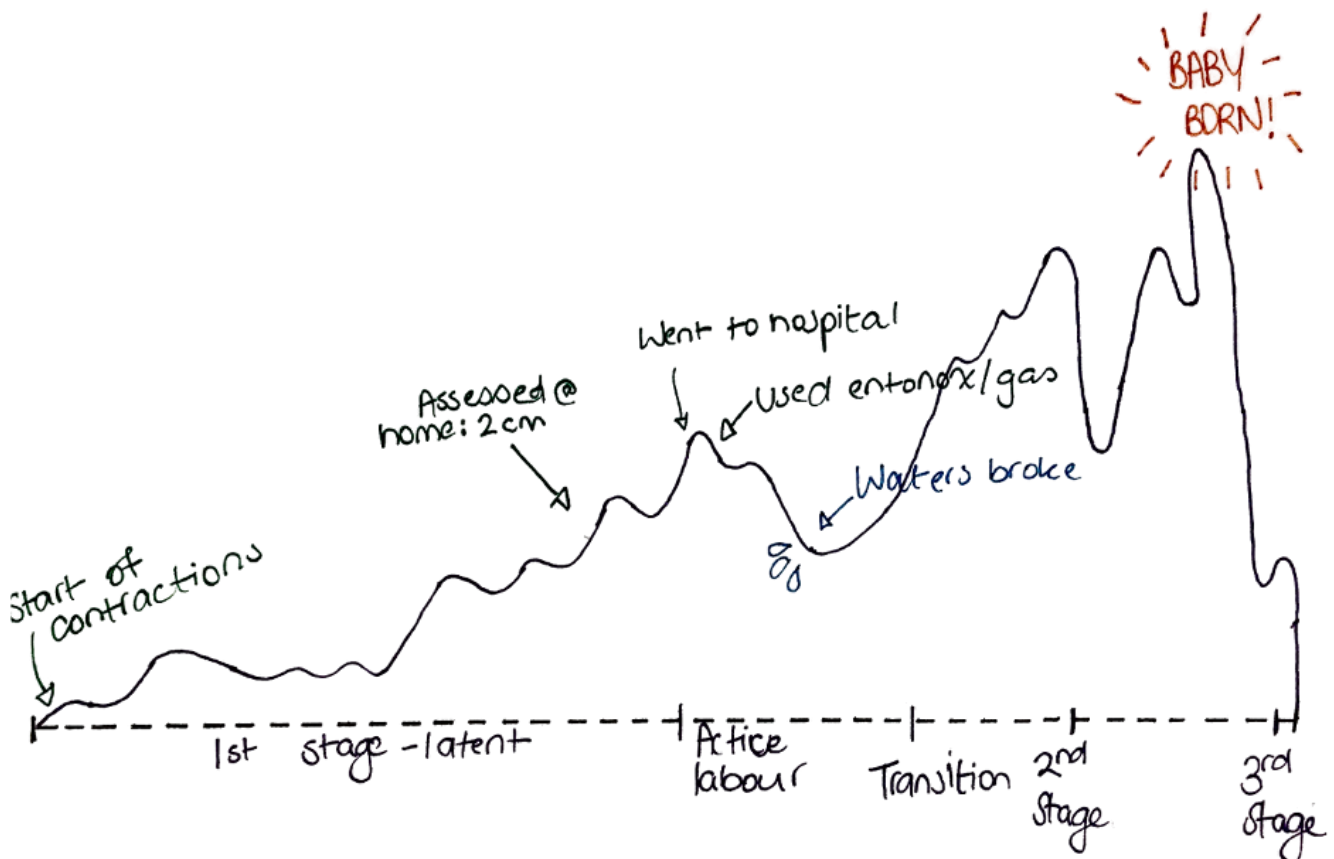
PARENTING CHECK IN

- Are there any aspects of your journey to parenthood that you would do differently if you were to have another child?
- Are you ok? If not, who will you reach out to?

If you or your spouse birthed your child, you may like to go into more detail about your labour and birth experience. If so, read on for further prompts and guides specific to telling your birth story.

YOUR BIRTH STORY

It can be helpful to draw a timeline of events. Creating a line drawing of labour like the one below may be helpful. Draw a curved line to represent the intensity of labour and your emotions.



USE THE LINE BELOW TO GET STARTED



GETTING STARTED

My baby's name

Place they were born

Date of birth

Time of birth

Birth weight

Gestation

Jot down the main memories, words, and emotions that come to mind when you think about your birth. Circling words on this chart may be helpful if you're unsure where to start.

Unkown Lonely Physical Peaceful
Whanau Scary Easeful Fast Noisy
Supportive Challenging Overwhelming Exciting
Messy Intense Slow Life changing Loving
Fun Induction Empowering Doctors More than I could handle
Joyful Rollercoaster Hard work
Manageable Supported Painful
Lots of bodily fluids Nurturing
Normal Exhausting

YOUR BIRTH STORY

- Describe the last few days of your pregnancy. How did you spend your time while waiting for your baby to be ready? Did you do anything to help prepare for labour?
- What was the first moment you thought “is this labour?” What did it feel like? Who did you tell? Did it turn into labour or fade away?
- What were your hopes and dreams for birth that you included in your birth plan?
- Who were your support people? Were they who you wanted to be there?
- What were some of the timing points - when did you start timing contractions, when did you call your support person/people, when did you call your LMC/ go to the birth centre/hospital?
- What was the journey to the birth centre/hospital like?
- What pain relief did you use? Was this effective? Would you use it again?
- Describe transition in 3 words, expand on why you chose each of these words.
- Were you able to push spontaneously or did you have directed pushing? What felt good during this stage?
- How was your perineum protected/supported with pushing/crowning?
- Did you need any medical support? Why?
- Describe the moment you saw your baby for the first time. Describe the details you first noticed about them, the words you first said to them, if you cried/ laughed/ marvelled.
- How did you birth your placenta?
- How did you plan to feed your baby? How was the first time feeding them?
- What kind of support did you need in your first few days postpartum? Stitches? Feeding help? Staying in the birth centre for a few days?
- Was your care team understanding of your whānau & inclusive of your needs?

GIVING BIRTH CHECK IN

Sometimes re-telling your parenthood or birth story can be emotional, in lots of different ways. Please use these last questions to check in with yourself in more detail.

- What differed from your birth plan? Were there any hopes and dreams that were not realised?
- Do you understand why and how each aspect of birth happened, if not, who can you reach out to for clarification?
- What would you do differently if you were to have another baby?
- Are you ok? If not, who will you reach out to?

Support

Writing your birth and parenting story can be a beautiful way to reflect on and process the events that led to you becoming a parent. Please seek support if in doing so, this has led to any unresolved questions or sadness.

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT TO PROCESS YOUR BIRTH,
PLEASE GO TO

www.mybirthstory.org.nz

SERVICES AVAILABLE

1737 free text/phone counselling 24/7
OUTline 6pm-8pm 0800 688 5463
Rainbow Youth 13-27yr olds
Your GP
Depression Helpline 0800 111 757 24/7