



## Pieces of a letter on the impact of community lactation support

The letter and client feedback shared below are testimony to why representation matters. Representation matters in lactation care because it creates safety, familiarity, and understanding in a time where most families feel incredibly vulnerable. Having Black lactation support for Black birthing families is central to the reclamation of our traditional practices of care based in kinship and community.

It is my desire that any mom going through the unpredictable stages of pregnancy, prenatal care, birth, delivery, postpartum care and motherhood would be blessed with the supportive services the only those well qualified can provide in today's health culture.

I wanted to successfully breastfeed my baby for an entire year and to make sure my husband knew how to support my journey. We had no clue that in 3 months, life as we knew it would change due to COVID-19.

### My breastfeeding journey with Mekayla

In just a matter of weeks, Shonte' was the additional support I needed to navigate being a nursing mom in a pandemic. I ran into every single issue possible but Shonte' had an answer for everything. When I couldn't find milk storage bags on the shelves at the store, she delivered them to my doorstep. When I had trouble latching, she came over covered from head to toe in PPE gear just to help support my goal. When I fell ill with COVID, she walked my husband through the step-by-step process of prepping bottles safely on Zoom. When I went through my battle with postpartum depression, she reassured me that I was an amazing mom.



I successfully breastfed my daughter for 14 months



Briella  
September 3, 2021



### Our journey with Briella

In 2021, my husband and I learned that we were expecting another bundle of joy and the stress of still being in a pandemic while trying to manage day to day life, I was concerned about a successful pregnancy. On September 3, 2021, at only 25 weeks and 2 days, our daughter Brielle was born via emergency cesarean delivery due to the dangers of excessive preeclampsia. Our premature baby spent 85 days in the NICU at the University of Michigan-C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Shonte' was the peace in the middle of the biggest storm of my husband and I had ever faced. Not only did she provide emotional support, but those services weren't just for me. She made sure that my husband had supportive services as well.

### Briella comes home

Briella went home with us for the first time the Saturday after Thanksgiving and Shonte' again made sure we were ready for that new adventure. She was the first person to come and visit and to help provide support for our daughter's new home life. She was discharged on a blended formula meal plan that too became a struggle because we were in the early stages of the national formula shortage. But Shonte' reached out to her multiple support networks and helped us find Briella's specialty formula when it was not available on the shelf at the local groceries stores in our county.

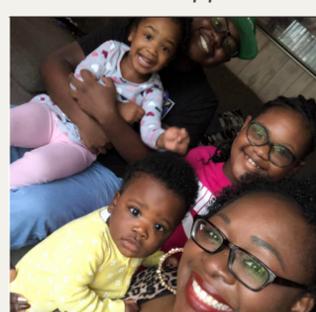


Briella  
Is one now and doing great!



### Our family

Our daughters and our family would not be thriving, healthy and strong without the support she (Shonte') has provided our family for the last 3 years. I can only wish that other struggling moms and families in the Flint and Genesee County area can feel the joy I had knowing that we had support for our precious babies.



The Stroziers