

Important information for unmarried parents



Give your child the gift of you

Establishing paternity gives children the gift of two legal parents

Paternity means fatherhood. Paternity establishment is how a biological father becomes the legal father of his child if he and the mother are not married.

If you and your partner are unmarried, you must establish paternity before the father's name can be placed on the birth certificate.

Paternity benefits everyone!

Fathers get legal rights to their children and their name on the birth certificate

Mothers get help with responsibilities and important decisions

Guardians determine children's benefits by knowing their legal rights to support and inheritance, and may be able to get help with responsibilities and important decisions

Children get all the benefits children of married parents do, including:

1. A relationship with both parents and a sense of identity
2. Knowledge of both families' medical histories
3. Access to health insurance and benefits like Social Security and inheritances
4. Decreased chance of high-risk behaviors, like dropping out of school or taking drugs

There are two ways to establish paternity in Kentucky

1. **Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit:**

Complete and sign a [Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit](#). It's free and you can sign the form in several places:

- a. **At the hospital:** When your child is born. A hospital worker will explain everything as you fill out the form.
- b. **At your local health department or child support office:** Workers at these offices will also explain everything and answer your questions.

2. **Order of paternity:** The child support agency can conduct genetic testing and petition the court to issue an order of paternity.

Establishing paternity can make a world of difference for fathers, mothers, and their children.

To learn more **800.248.1163**



**Kentucky Paternity
Acknowledgment
Program**

Other important details

Required ID

Each parent must show a valid government-issued photo ID before they can complete and sign their section of the paternity affidavit. A notary public must be present. To learn what types of ID are acceptable, contact the facility where you plan to complete the form.

Your responsibilities as parents

Establishing paternity gives you rights and responsibilities, so it's important you understand what they are. Make sure to read the "Rights and Responsibilities" section of the paternity affidavit carefully before signing the document.

If you're not sure who the father is

A genetic test, also called a DNA test, can help determine whether a man is the biological father. Your local health department or child support office can give you more information.

If the husband is not the father

If the mother is married to someone other than the biological father at the time of the child's conception and/or birth, parents can complete a Three-Way Paternity Affidavit form. This requires the agreement of the mother, husband and biological father. Contact the [Office of Vital Statistics](#) for more information.

Changing your mind later

If either parent changes their mind after signing the [Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity Affidavit](#), they have 60 days from the last signature to rescind (cancel) the establishment.

Custody and visitation

Paternity establishment and custody are two separate issues. Under most circumstances, when a child is born to unmarried parents, the child lives with the mother and she has physical custody. Once paternity is established, the father can seek visitation rights through the court system.

Paternity and child support

In most cases, it's up to the parent who has physical custody of the child to request support. However, if the child or parent is receiving certain benefits provided for the medical or financial care of that child, the father may be required to pay child support. To learn more, contact your local child support office, located on our website: kentuckychildsupport.ky.gov.

Paternity for non-U.S. citizens

Parents who are non-U.S. citizens can establish paternity for their child. The paternity affidavit is not used to track residency or citizenship.

If either parent is a minor

If either parent is a minor, they cannot sign the [Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity Affidavit](#). Paternity must be established through the court. For more information, contact your local child support office, located on our website: kentuckychildsupport.ky.gov.

Paternity Resources

Establishing paternity

800.248.1163

Birth certificates and Three-Way Paternity Affidavits

Office of Vital Statistics

800.241.8322

<https://chfs.ky.gov/agencies/dph/dehp/vsb/Pages/default.aspx>

Genetic testing and child support
kentuckychildsupport.ky.gov



A program of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services An Equal Opportunity Employer M/F/D. Paid for with federal and state funds.