



# How a *Declaration of Paternity* Can Help You and Your New Baby

**What is a *Declaration of Paternity*?**

The *Declaration of Paternity* is a legal document that, when signed by both parents, says the man is the natural father of the child. Signing the *Declaration of Paternity* is voluntary.

**How can a *Declaration of Paternity* help us?**

When the parents of a child are not married at the beginning of the pregnancy or at the birth of the child, the father may NOT be considered a legal parent with rights or responsibilities for the child.

You can sign the *Declaration of Paternity* to help the father gain legal rights as the child's father. When signed by both parents, the form will legally establish a parent-child relationship between the father and child.

**Why should we sign the declaration?**

To show your child that you are proud to be his or her parents!

To legally establish the man as the child's father.

To allow the father's name to be added to your child's birth certificate.

To allow your child to be added to the father's health insurance plan.

To make sure that the father's social security or veteran's benefits are paid to your child, if eligible, in case the father dies or is disabled.

To protect your child's right to inherit from his or her father.

**What does it mean when we sign the declaration?**

After both parents sign the declaration and it is filed with the California Department of Child Support Services, it legally establishes a parent-child relationship between the father and the child. Once paternity is established, the father will have the legal rights and financial responsibilities of a parent under California law. Signing this form will give the father parental rights to seek custody or visitation, in a court action, and to be consulted about the adoption of the child.

**Can we rescind or cancel the declaration after we sign it?**

Either parent may cancel or rescind the *Declaration of Paternity* by completing a rescission form for the Declaration of Paternity and filing it with the California Department of Child Support Services within 60 days from the date the declaration was signed. Rescission forms are available at the local child support agency or the local registrar of births and deaths' office.

**How do we fill out the declaration?**

Sections A and B should be filled out by the parents of the child. The witness will fill out section C. See the instructions on the declaration for more details.

**What do we do if we have more questions?**

For more information about the *Declaration of Paternity*, establishing parentage or child support, please contact the local child support agency, Family Law Facilitator's Office, legal services organization or contact a **State POP Coordinator** at **(866)249-0773** or e-mail at **askpop@dcss.ca.gov**

