

Who pays for the tests?

If the state orders the test, the state will pay for it. If the test identifies the father, the state may charge him for it.

What happens when the court names the father?

He will receive legal paperwork and has 30 days to respond. If he thinks he is not the father, he can get a genetic test.

Why should the father respond?

Then he can give input on the amount he must pay. Otherwise, the court will set the amount.

What is establishing fatherhood?

Establishing fatherhood is the legal identification of the child's father.

Will my information be kept private?

Yes. The child support enforcement office will protect your personal confidential information.

What does it cost?

If you get help from Medicaid, Foster Care, or cash assistance programs, these services will be free. Otherwise, they may cost you up to \$25. Some states charge extra. Ask your local office what they would charge.

What do I need to establish paternity?

You must give the caseworker as much information as possible about the father—and the mother's relationship with him. Anything from the alleged father saying the child is his would be helpful, such as pictures, letters, or financial support.



Child Support Enforcement Services

Establishing Paternity

Our children.
Our responsibility.

What documents do I need?

Your caseworker will help you—but you must do your part by bringing as much information as you can:

- Picture identification—Your driver's license, student I.D., matrícula consular I.D., or other I.D.
- Social Security Number or Individual Tax Identification—yours and the other parent's.
- Your child's birth certificate.
- The acknowledgement of paternity, if you have one.
- Everything you know about where to find the alleged father—date and place of birth, where he or she is living and working, phone number, names of relatives and friends, license plate, bank records, criminal history, etc.

How do I find an office?

Every state has an office.

Visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/extinf.html>

To find a tribal office, visit <http://ocse.acf.hhs.gov/int/directories/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.tribalivd>

How can I establish fatherhood?

When two parents are married and bear a child, fatherhood is automatic. If the parents were not married when the child was born, the father can...

- Sign something to say he is the father, called voluntarily acknowledging paternity, until the child reaches the age of majority.
- Be named the father at a court or administrative hearing.

Why do this?

Research shows that children whose fathers help raise them are likely to be more successful in life.

Establishing fatherhood creates ties between the child and father, both emotionally and legally. The child has a chance to develop a relationship with the father and the father's family—and may gain a greater sense of identity.

Your child also gets certain legal rights and privileges, such as access to...

- Child support.
- The father's health and life insurance benefits.
- Social Security.
- Military benefits.
- Veterans' benefits.
- Inheritances.
- The father's medical history.

When is the best time to do this?

When the child is born, at the hospital. CSE offers in-hospital voluntary paternity acknowledgment for unmarried parents in some hospitals.

What if the father cannot support the child—or already does?

You should establish paternity anyway. Then the child and father will have emotional and legal ties, and child support can be collected more easily in the future. If the father becomes disabled or dies, the child will still have legal benefits.

What happens if the father lives out of state?

You may be able to establish paternity in your state, or in the father's state.

What if I am not sure who the father is?

If more than one man could be the child's father, each man may need to take a genetic test.

What is a genetic test?

A genetic or DNA test is a very accurate way to see who the father is. The test is simple and painless. It uses blood samples or tissue swabbed from the inside of the cheek.

Who needs to take the test?

The mother, child, and alleged father.

