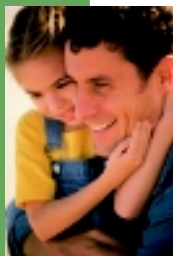


/pa-ter-ni-ty/ the quality or
state of being a father

Establish Paternity For Your Child



Tom Ridge
Governor

Feather O. Houstoun
Secretary

Pennsylvania
Department of Public Welfare
www.dpw.state.pa.us

In Pennsylvania, when a child is born to unmarried parents, there is no legal relationship between the father and the child.

Unmarried parents can establish a legal relationship between the father and the child. This is called **paternity establishment**.



Why is paternity establishment important?

Studies show that fathers play an important role in the lives of their children. Children who have a father figure are more likely to stay in school and avoid drugs and crime. They also are more likely to grow up to be responsible adults.

Pennsylvania's welfare law requires welfare clients to establish paternity, unless there is a "good cause" reason for not doing so, like a domestic violence situation. If you have questions, talk to your welfare caseworker.



How will this benefit my child?

Birth Certificate

Paternity must be established before your child's birth certificate will show the name of the father.

Medical History

After the identity of your child's father is legally established, your child will have access to his or her father's medical history. This information is important to doctors and your child's good health.

Child Support

Your child's father may be required by a court to pay child support and provide health insurance coverage for your child.

Social Security

If your child's father becomes disabled or dies, your child may receive Social Security benefits.

Inheritance

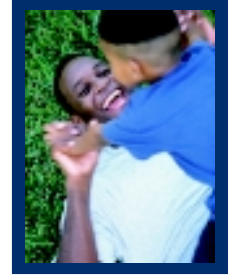
Your child may share a right to inherit property from his or her father's estate.

Life Insurance

Your child may be entitled to his or her father's life insurance benefits.

U.S. Military Benefits

Your child may be eligible for medical coverage and life insurance benefits if his or her father worked for the military or if he works for the military now. If the father suffered a disability while serving in the military, your child could receive help paying for a college education.



How to establish paternity

There are two ways to establish paternity. A mother and father can sign a form called "**Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity.**" The Domestic Relations Office of the county court also can help parents establish paternity.

If both parents complete the paternity form, you don't have to go to court to establish paternity. However, if you receive cash welfare benefits, or want to get a Child Support Order, you must still go to the Domestic Relations Office.

Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity forms are available from these places:

Hospitals and Birthing Centers County Assistance Offices

The hospital, birthing center, or County Assistance Office can help you complete the form.

Paternity establishment forms also are available by calling DPW's Bureau of Child Support Enforcement free at **1-800-932-0211.**

Using the courts to establish paternity



If you do not know where your child's father is now, or you have questions about establishing paternity, please contact your local Domestic Relations Office. Or, call the state Bureau of Child Support Enforcement free at 1-800-932-0211.

If the man you think is your child's father won't admit that he is the father, you can establish paternity at the county Domestic Relations Office.* The Domestic Relations Office can help you file a petition with the county court. This petition will name the man you think is your child's father and request a child support order.

The Domestic Relations Office will hold a support conference—you and the man you say is your child's father must attend. At this conference, the man has a chance to admit he's your child's father.

If the man named as your child's father says he isn't sure he's the father, or he denies it, the court may order a genetic test. If the test proves he is your child's father, the court will issue an order that establishes your child's paternity. This order is legal proof of your child's father.

*The Domestic Relations Office is usually located in or near the county courthouse. The telephone numbers for the county Domestic Relations offices in Pennsylvania are listed on the back of this brochure.



Domestic Relations Offices

Adams	Gettysburg	717-337-9804
Allegheny	Pittsburgh	412-350-5600
Armstrong	Kittanning	724-548-3249
Beaver	Beaver	724-773-8500
Bedford	Bedford	814-623-4813
Berks	Reading	610-478-2900
Blair	Hollidaysburg	814-693-3220
Bradford	Towanda	570-265-1718
Bucks	Doylestown	1-888-848-6538
Butler	Butler	724-284-5181
Cambria	Ebensburg	1-800-638-4409
Cameron	Emporium	814-486-5875
Carbon	Jim Thorpe	570-325-2681
Centre	Bellefonte	814-355-6741
Chester	West Chester	610-344-6215
Clarion	Clarion	814-226-1030
Clearfield	Clearfield	814-765-5339
Clinton	Lock Haven	570-893-4055
Columbia	Bloomsburg	570-387-8870
Crawford	Meadville	814-336-2695
Cumberland	Carlisle	717-240-6225
Dauphin	Harrisburg	717-255-2796
Delaware	Media	610-891-4314
Elk	Ridgway	814-772-5155
Erie	Erie	814-451-6353
Fayette	Uniontown	724-430-1260
Forest	Tionesta	814-755-3840
Franklin	Chambersburg	717-264-6144
Fulton	McConnellsburg	717-485-0810
Greene	Waynesburg	724-852-5214
Huntingdon	Huntingdon	814-643-6741
Indiana	Indiana	724-465-3940
Jefferson	Brookville	814-849-1632
Juniata	Mifflintown	717-436-7749
Lackawanna	Scranton	570-963-6721
Lancaster	Lancaster	717-299-8141
Lawrence	New Castle	724-658-5651
Lebanon	Lebanon	717-228-4480
Lehigh	Allentown	610-782-3185
Luzerne	Wilkes-Barre	570-822-0600
Lycoming	Williamsport	570-327-2395
McKean	Smithport	814-887-3377
Mercer	Mercer	724-662-2404
Mifflin	Lewistown	717-248-3955
Monroe	Stroudsburg	570-420-3650
Montgomery	Norristown	610-278-3544
Montour	Danville	570-271-3031
Northampton	Easton	610-253-3566
Northumberland	Sunbury	570-988-4227
Perry	New Bloomfield	717-582-2131
Philadelphia	Philadelphia	215-686-7466
Pike	Milford	570-296-6511
Potter	Coudersport	814-274-7020
Schuylkill	Pottsville	570-628-1588
Snyder	Middleburg	570-837-4230
Somerset	Somerset	814-445-1440
Sullivan	Laporte	570-946-5481
Susquehanna	Montrose	570-278-4600 Ext. 170
Tioga	Wellsboro	570-724-9330
Union	Lewisburg	570-524-8661
Venango	Franklin	814-432-9590
Warren	Warren	814-728-3540
Washington	Washington	724-228-6756
Wayne	Honesdale	570-251-9827
Westmoreland	Greensburg	724-830-3200
Wyoming	Tunkhannock	570-836-3249
York	York	717-771-9605