

PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

Why should I establish paternity for my child?



Paternity can be established through marriage, paternity affidavit, or court order.

LEGAL BENEFITS

PATERNITY RIGHTS

Establishing paternity may allow for the legal father to have visitation rights, custody rights, and legal say in decisions about the child.

CHILD ACCESS

Children may have access to the legal father's medical insurance, medical history, Social Security benefits, disability insurance, child support, inheritance, pensions, and veteran's benefits.



DECREASED RISKS

Lack of father involvement may lead to increased risk of disease, substandard academic achievement, behavioral problems, or teenage pregnancy.



MENTAL BENEFITS

FEWER PROBLEMS

Fathers who provide for their children (economically and emotionally) may have children who do better emotionally and have fewer behavioral problems.

INVOLVEMENT

CHILD'S LIFE

Fathers who establish paternity at the hospital are more likely to be involved in their child's life.

WELL-BEING

Establishing paternity may lead to increased child support payments and visitation, which positively impact child mental health and well-being.



This information is provided under the partnership between Iowa State University's Child Welfare Research and Training Project and the Iowa Department of Human Services Child Support Recovery Unit.

HOW TO ESTABLISH PATERNITY

PATERNITY AFFIDAVIT

COMPLETE FOR FREE

Can be completed at the hospital, your county recorder office, or local child support office.

Form is submitted to the Bureau of Health Statistics, who approves it and adds the father's name to the birth certificate.

Can be completed for children of any age.

NEED TO BRING

One Current U.S. government-issued ID

- driver's license
- state photo ID
- United States passport/visa
- military ID
- permanent residence card
- employment authorization card
- current school photo ID



Or 2-3 of the following:
(names and current addresses must match)

- income tax return
- court documents
- expired driver's license plus one other document in the same name
- criminal record
- hospital bill
- Medicaid/Medicare card
- rent or mortgage receipt
- car title
- insurance policy
- medical card
- find more here, including international documents: bit.ly/vpaidlist



OTHER OPTIONS

COURT ORDER

Paternity can be legally established by a court order. You may have to hire a private attorney to obtain a court order for visitation or custody.

Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU) can ask the court to establish paternity, child support, and medical support; then CSRU enforces the court order.

MARRIAGE

If the mother was married at conception or birth or anytime between conception and birth, that man is the legal father.

If the child's mother was married to a man who is not the biological father, a court order must be issued to disestablish the legal father.