



## What will establishing paternity do for my child?

When you establish paternity, your child may be eligible for the following:

- **Birth Certificate** - Your child's birth certificate will show the name of the father.
- **Health Care Benefits** - If the father's employer provides health care benefits, the father may be able to include the child under his health care plan.
- **Social Security** - The child may be eligible to receive Social Security benefits if the father becomes disabled or dies.
- **Inheritance** - Upon the death of the father, a child may have the right to inherit from his estate.
- **U.S. Military Benefits** - The child may be entitled to benefits as a result of the father's service in the military.
- **Child Support** - The court will order the father to pay child support until the child turns 18 or graduates from high school, whichever occurs later, unless otherwise ordered by the court. Fathers who pay child support tend to be more involved in their children's lives and children who receive child support appear to perform better in school and are less likely to become teen parents.

Important information about establishing paternity in Pennsylvania. If you need help reading this, please call 1-800-932-0211. Language assistance is provided free of charge.

Información importante acerca de la determinación de paternidad en Pensilvania. Si necesita ayuda para leer esto, llame al 1-800-932-0211. La asistencia relacionada con el idioma se proporciona sin costo alguno.

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បើអ្នក ត្រូវការជំនួយដើម្បីអានសំបុត្រនេះ សូមទូរស័ព្ទតាមលេខ  
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关于在宾州确立父亲身份的重要通知。您阅读此通知时如果需要获得协助，请致电1-800-932-0211。此处免费提供语言协助。

Важная информация по поводу установления отцовства в штате Пенсильвания. Если вам нужна помощь при чтении данного материала, звоните по телефону 1-800-932-0211. Помощь переводчика предоставляется бесплатно.

Thông tin quan trọng về việc thiết lập quan hệ phụ huynh trong Tiểu Bang Pennsylvania. Nếu quý vị cần đọc thông tin này, xin gọi số 1-800-932-0211. Trợ giúp về ngôn ngữ được cung cấp miễn phí.

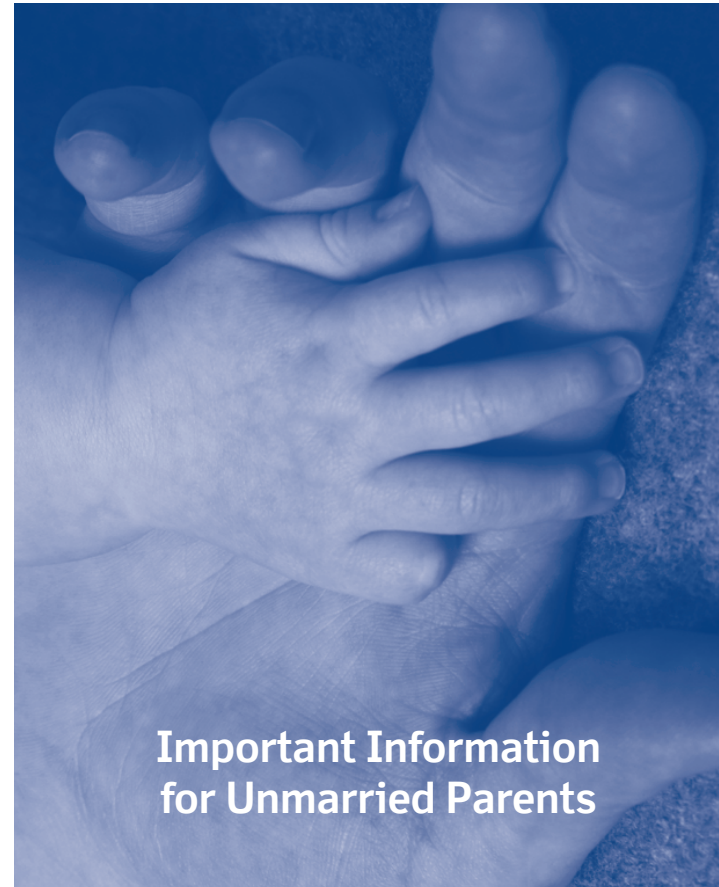


**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE

**Bureau of Child Support Enforcement**  
[www.childsupport.state.pa.us](http://www.childsupport.state.pa.us)



## Establishing Paternity for your child is in your hands



**Important Information for Unmarried Parents**

## What is paternity?

In Pennsylvania, when a child is born to a woman who is unmarried, there is no legal relationship between the father and the child unless:

- Both parents have signed a voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity, or AOP, form;
- The father signs an Acknowledgement of Paternity/Waiver of Trial form at the county Domestic Relations Section, or DRS; or
- A county DRS or court has entered an order that establishes the legal father of the child.

**Note:** Under current Pennsylvania law, when a child is born to a married woman, the husband is the presumed legal father of the child.

## What is an Acknowledgement of Paternity, or AOP, form?

An AOP form is a free and voluntary way to establish the legal father of the child and does not require approval by the court.

## How can I get an AOP form?

- When the child is born, an unmarried mother and the father may sign an AOP form at the hospital.
- After the child is born, you can request the AOP form by contacting:
  - ◆ Your county assistance office (CAO);
  - ◆ Your county DRS; or
  - ◆ The Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Child Support Enforcement Helpline toll-free at **1-800-932-0211**.
- If you have Internet access, visit [www.childsupport.state.pa.us](http://www.childsupport.state.pa.us) and click on Establishing Paternity to:
  - ◆ request an AOP form; and
  - ◆ view a sample AOP form.



## What if the mother won't sign the AOP form?

A man believing he is the father of a child may make a claim of paternity by completing the child's information section, the child's birthplace information section, the mother's name, and the father's information section on the AOP form. This allows the man to be notified of certain legal proceedings concerning the child, but does not give him any parental rights. If the man feels he is the father of the child and wants parental rights, he may contact the county DRS and request genetic testing of the child.

## What is genetic testing?

Genetic testing is a procedure that identifies whether there is a biological relationship or genetic match between two people by comparing their DNA. The DNA is collected painlessly by swabbing the inside of a person's cheek. Contact your DRS for more information on scheduling a genetic test.

## What if I'm unsure that I'm the father?

Do not sign the AOP form if you're unsure that you are the father. Instead, contact your county DRS and request information about how to establish paternity.

## If I am separated from my child, does the AOP form give me custody or visitation rights?

No. Custody and visitation are separate decisions made by the courts.

## If I do not know the identity of my child's father, what should I do?

Do not sign the AOP form if you are unsure of the identity of your child's father. Instead, contact your county DRS and request information about how to establish paternity.

## I don't know where to find my child's father, what can I do?

The DRS can help you locate the father if you want to establish paternity for your child.

## What must I do if I am receiving cash assistance for my child?

If you receive cash assistance, the law states that you must cooperate in establishing paternity and obtaining a child support order, unless there is Good Cause to excuse you from doing so. Talk to your caseworker at the CAO if you have domestic violence or Good Cause concerns.

## Who do I call if I have questions?

If you have more questions or would like more information about establishing paternity, contact the Department of Public Welfare, Bureau of Child Support Enforcement at: **1-800-932-0211** or visit [www.childsupport.state.pa.us](http://www.childsupport.state.pa.us) and click on Frequently Asked Questions - Paternity.

