

Children need the love and support of both parents in their lives.

What is paternity?

Paternity means legal fatherhood. In the State of New Jersey, paternity establishment is how a biological father becomes the legal father of his child if he and the mother are not married.

For unmarried parents, the only way a father's name can appear on the birth certificate is if both parents complete a Certificate of Parentage.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is it easy to establish paternity?

Yes! The process is easy. It's available to parents if the mother was not married at any time during her pregnancy.

To establish paternity at the hospital, parents simply complete a Certificate of Parentage with the birth certificate coordinator. This adds the father's name to the child's birth certificate.

What will happen at the hospital?

Establishing paternity is **free** if you do it before you leave the hospital. Here's how it works:

- The birth certificate coordinator goes over the Certificate of Parentage with you and answers your questions
- Both the mother and the father fill out and sign their section of the Certificate of Parentage
- Both parents present valid identification
- The birth certificate coordinator witnesses both the mother's and father's signature



Can I establish paternity at a later date?

Yes! You can complete a Certificate of Parentage at a later date at your local registrar's office or county welfare agency.

What if I change my mind?

You should think carefully about establishing paternity. If both the father and mother change their minds, they have 60 days to cancel the paternity acknowledgment.

What if I am not sure that I am the father?

A DNA test can help you find out if you're the child's biological father. Call the New Jersey Paternity Opportunity Office toll free at 1-800-POP-6607 (1-800-767-6607) to learn about a low-cost DNA test through the local welfare agency. If you're not sure you are the father, you should not complete the Certificate of Parentage.

What if I am married but my husband is not the father?

By New Jersey law, if a mother is married at the time of conception, birth, or during the 300 days before giving birth, then her husband is believed to be the father of the child. The husband's name will automatically be placed on the birth certificate, unless he fills out a form that says he is not. This form is called an Affidavit of Denial of Paternity (AOD).

To have the biological father's name placed on the birth certificate, the mother and her husband must first fill out an AOD. Once this is done, she and the biological father can complete a Certificate of Parentage. When both forms are complete, the biological father's name will be added to the birth certificate.

AODs are available at the hospital, local registrar's office, and county welfare offices.

Benefits of Establishing Paternity

Establishing paternity gives you and your child the opportunities you deserve:

- The father gains legal rights by having his name on the birth certificate
- The child has access to any benefits the father has such as Social Security, health insurance, and Veterans benefits.
- Both parents have the ability to establish an emotional bond with the child
- Both parents share the responsibility and rewards of parenthood
- The child has access to both families' medical histories and lineage
- Both parents are committed to the child



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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

For more information:

www.nj-paternity.com

1-800-POP-6607

(1-800-767-6607)



**Make the best choice
for your child—
establish paternity!**

Be a Special Part of Your Child's Life



Information for unmarried parents
provided by the New Jersey
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