

# Paternity Establishment (Fatherhood)

## CALIFORNIA'S CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM: A Resource for Parents ...



Paternity establishment is the process of determining a child's legal father. The benefits of establishing paternity are numerous for all parties, but most of all for your child. Establishing paternity is necessary before custody, visitation and child support issues can be addressed by the court. Research shows that fathers who pay child support are more likely to be engaged in a child's life.

### ■ Who needs to establish paternity?

If the parents are not married at the time of conception, paternity needs to be established. By law, a man is presumed to be the legal father when he is married to the mother at the time the child is conceived. If the marriage occurs after the child is conceived, paternity still must be established legally.

### ■ How can I establish paternity?

#### 1. By Voluntary Declaration

The Declaration of Paternity (CS 909) is a legal form that, when signed by both parties and sent to the state, establishes that the man is the legal father of the named child without having to go to court. The form can be obtained at the hospital right after your child is born, and may also be obtained through the child support office, or at the court via the Family Law Facilitator. For more information, call the Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) at: 1-866-249-0773.

#### 2. By Court Order

The mother or father of a child can request assistance from the local child support agency to pursue legal action to establish paternity. In many instances the local child support agency can facilitate genetic testing as part of the process to establish a court order of paternity.

### Why is Establishing Paternity Important?

Paternity provides a child of unmarried parents the same legal rights as a child born to married parents.

Once paternity is legally established, children are entitled to the following:

- Financial support
- Access to Family Medical History
- Inheritance Rights

And if available:

- Medical and life insurance benefits
- Social security benefits

Contact your local child support agency: 1-866-901-3212 or: TTY:1-866-399-4096  
<http://www.childsup.ca.gov>



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