

Establishing PATERNITY

A Guide for Fathers in South Carolina



SOUTH CAROLINA CENTER
FOR FATHERS AND FAMILIES

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity Health System

Reasons for Establishing Paternity

- Gives a father legal rights to his child
- Must be established to pursue visitation or custody
- Helps a father show he is committed to his child
- Protects a child's entitlements to father's benefit such as social security, life insurance and inheritance
- Gives a child access to medical and family histories from the father's side of the family

Checklist to Getting Your Name on Your Child's Birth Certificate

- Your child must have been born in South Carolina.
- Get a certified copy of the court order that establishes paternity from the Clerk of Court in the county where the order was issued. Be sure it has the child's full name and date of birth. If it just has a first name and initial or just a year of birth, ask the Clerk to also give you a certified copy of the information sheet that has this complete information. The form is called the Confidential Reference List of Redacted Identifiers.
- Complete the DHEC birth certificate application form D-2595. This form should be carefully completed with correct spelling, dates, etc. This information will be used on the birth certificate so make it correct and readable. This form is available on their website: <http://www.scdhec.gov/Library/D-2595.pdf>
- There is a fee of \$12.00 for the birth certificate search and a fee of \$15.00 to amend the birth certificate for a total of \$27.00.
- You must have a government issued photo ID such as a driver's license, state ID card, school or employer ID, military ID or passport.
- Take the certified court order, birth certificate application, \$27.00 cash and the government issued ID to your local vital records department at DHEC.





Three Ways to Establish Paternity in South Carolina.

1 Marriage

- You are the legal father if you are married to the mother when a child is born or conceived.
- Your name will be added to the birth certificate.
- You have all legal rights and responsibilities for the child.

You do not have to be the biological father to be the legal father of a child.

2 Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity

- There is agreement with the mother that you are the biological father.
- A Voluntary Acknowledgement is usually signed in the hospital at birth with assistance from a Birth Certificate Clerk.
- Both mother and father must complete the form and sign the form in front of a notary.
- If the Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity is not completed at the hospital, the mother and father may complete the form at a later date at the local DHEC office.
- There will be a fee of \$27.00 if done at a later date.
- Valid government issued photo ID required for both parents.
- Your name will be added to the birth certificate.

You will pay DHEC \$12.00 to do a birth certificate search and \$15.00 to amend the certificate.

3 Court Order

- Legal paternity can be established through a court order.
- This can be done through a private attorney or through DSS Child Support Services Division.
- A genetic test may be required by the court. Be sure to ask for the test at the beginning of your case.
- Once court-ordered paternity is established, you STILL need to apply to have your name put on your child's birth certificate.

DSS will provide a genetic test free of charge.

See Checklist



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For more information on resources for fathers and families in South Carolina, please call 844-4SCDADS.