



Making positive choices for your child

South Carolina Parenting Opportunity Program

Program for Unmarried Parents to Establish Paternity

Paternity Establishment through Genetic Testing

If you are not sure who the biological father is, you should not sign a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form at the hospital! The South Carolina Department of Social Services/Child Support Services Division (CSSD) offers genetic testing for either the mother or potential father **at no cost**.

How does genetic testing work?

Genetic testing is a quick and painless way to establish paternity. CSSD uses the buccal swab method where a genetic sample is collected by swabbing the inner facial cheek. The samples are collected by a trained technician.

How long will it take to get the results of my genetic testing?

Generally, it takes three to four weeks to complete the paternity test once the last necessary party is tested. The parties will receive copies of the test results.

What is the cost of genetic testing?

CSSD offers a **no-cost**, court-admissible paternity test. To start the process either party submits an application to Child Support Services Division (CSSD).

What will happen when the genetic test results come back?

The State of South Carolina requires a finding of 95% or higher to establish a rebuttable presumption of paternity. Upon receipt of a genetic test result of 95% or higher, CSSD will set the case for an administrative child support hearing to establish paternity and, if the custodian requests, child support. If the result is returned at 0.00%, CSSD would close the case.

Visit the DSS website for information:
dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/.

To learn more about establishing paternity, please call **866-914-8786** or email scpop@dss.sc.gov.

This test is for parents who have not established paternity and are uncertain of the biological father. If the father is listed on the birth certificate or the mother is still legally married to someone else and wants to disestablish paternity, please seek legal counsel. This testing is only offered to parents seeking to establish paternity.

IMPORTANT: Establishing a father through the above DNA process does not automatically create an order for Child Support. The custodial parent of the child would have to request child support services to establish a support order.

