

# Benefits of Paternity Establishment

## Paternity helps children

- Have a relationship with both parents
- Know both families' medical histories
- Achieve better social, emotional, and educational outcomes
- Lowers likelihood of high-risk behavior
- Have access to either parent's health insurance and/or benefits such as social security or inheritance
- Provides a complete identity by having their father's name on the birth certificate

## Paternity helps mothers

- Share the responsibility and rewards of parenthood
- Receive financial support to assist in raising the child
- Access to expanded paternal family for additional support

## Paternity helps fathers

- Gain legal rights to their child
- Be recognized as the father by having his name on the birth certificate
- Show commitment to their child
- Establish an emotional bond with the child and participate in the child's life



Learn more about why paternity is important to your child.

Scan the QR Code to watch an informative video.



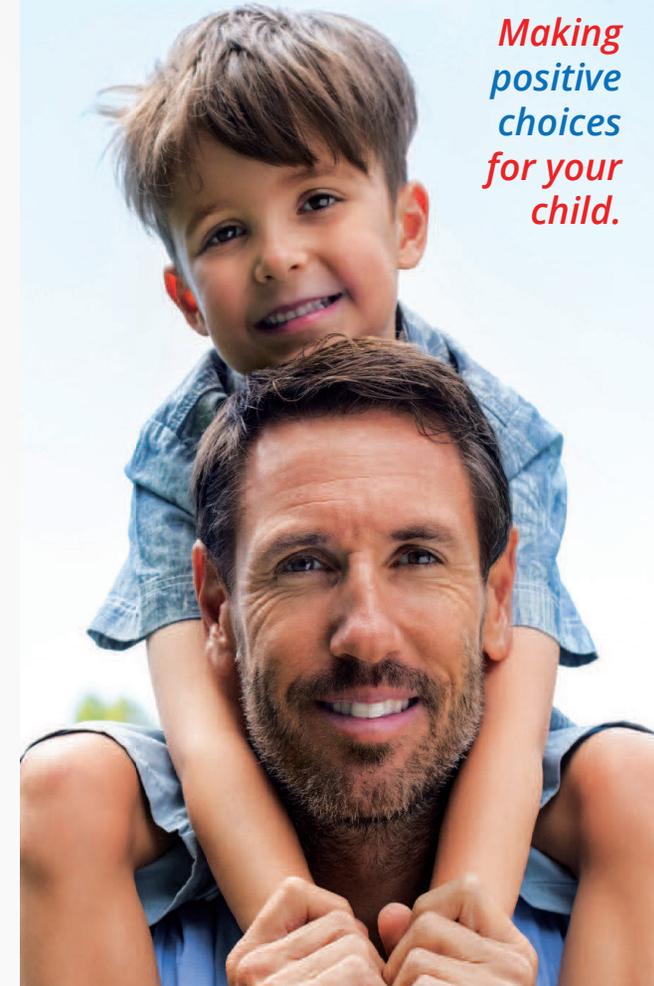
Toll-free  
(866) 914-8786

[www.dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/](http://www.dss.sc.gov/child-support/parents-families/establishing-paternity/)

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## What is paternity?

Paternity means legal fatherhood. If parents were unmarried at the time of the child's birth, they can complete a **Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment** form to create a legal connection between the child and their biological father.

## How does establishing paternity help my child?

- **Self-Esteem:** All children benefit from knowing both parents care for them.
- **Family Identity:** Establishing paternity often affords children extended families and relationships with both sides of the family.
- **Shared Parenting:** Establishes parenting as the responsibility of both parents
- **Health History:** Establishing paternity often increases the availability of health information.



## Why should I establish paternity?

Your child receives the benefits that come from having two legal parents, including:

- The father's name on the birth certificate
- Ability to be added to either parent's health insurance
- Eligibility for social security benefits and many other inheritance rights



*The greatest statistical indicator of whether an unmarried father will be involved in his child's life is whether he establishes paternity. Give your child the advantage of knowing their father right from the start!*

## Is paternity acknowledgment easy?

Yes! The process is easy and free as part of the birth registration process at the time of a child's birth. Parents simply complete a **Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment** form and show a valid government-issued photo ID.

**Accepted forms of ID include:**  
Driver's License • State ID Card  
Passport • Consular ID Card  
Government-issued identification from Country of Origin.

*Parents can also complete form later at a Regional Vital Records office for a fee.*

## What if one parent wants to establish paternity and the other does not?

The parent wanting to establish paternity can contact a private attorney for assistance or the SC POP office at **(866) 914-8786** for options to assist in establishing paternity.

## What if the parents complete the form and change their minds later?

Parents should think carefully before acknowledging paternity. If either parent changes their mind, they have 60 days from the last signature to rescind at the State Vital Records Office.

## What if we're not sure he's the father?

If you are unsure who the father is, you should not complete the form. Genetic testing can help determine a child's biological father.

Call the SCPOP office at **(866) 914-8786** to receive information on a **no-cost DNA test** through the South Carolina Department of Social Services and Child Support Services Division.

