

Q *Sure, there are paternity laws. But no one can prove I'm the father, right?*

A **Wrong.** Genetic tests can determine whether or not you are the biological father. If you aren't sure or deny that you are the father, you can request genetic tests be done, or the court might require you to take a genetic test and pay the bill. Genetic tests are also the surest and fastest way of proving you are *not* the father.

Q *But if I'm not married to the mother, I don't have any responsibility for the child, right?*

A **Wrong.** Under Connecticut law a father, no matter what his age or if he's married, has responsibility for his children. In fact, the DSS Bureau of Child Support Enforcement has ways to find a father and arrange for paternity to be proven so he can start providing for his child.

**GET THE FACTS:
CALL YOUR LOCAL
DSS CHILD SUPPORT OFFICE**

Bridgeport (203) 551-2703	Middletown (860) 704-3126	Stamford (203) 251-9417
Danbury (203) 207-8986	New Britain (860) 612-3492	Torrington (860) 496-6940
Hartford (860) 723-1002	New Haven (203) 974-8248	Waterbury (203) 597-4171
Manchester (860) 647-1441	Norwich (860) 823-3325	Willimantic (203) 465-3500

or call the toll-free Information & Problem Resolution Unit (IPRU) anywhere in Connecticut:

1-800-228-KIDS

The Department of Social Services' programs are available to all applicants and recipients without regard to race, color, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, learning disabilities, national origin, ancestry or language barriers.

The Department has a TDD/TTY line for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired and have a TDD/TTY: 1-800-842-4524.

Auxillary aids are also available for blind or visually impaired persons.

The Department of Social Services is an equal opportunity, affirmative action employer.

**Becoming
a
teenage
father
is
no
joke.**

Your responsibilities
under
Connecticut Law

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M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Michael P. Starkowski
Commissioner

Your girlfriend is pregnant.

You should know that the State of Connecticut has laws about your situation.

Here are the most common questions concerning paternity laws:

Q *The laws are there to punish me, right?*

A **Wrong.** Connecticut's paternity laws are there to protect your child and to give him or her the benefits of having a legal father. These benefits are important for your child, because he or she has the right to:

- ~ know that you are his/her father & have a relationship with you;
- ~ your support as he/she grows up;
- ~ know your medical history;
- ~ inherit from you when you die;
- ~ other benefits like social security, health insurance, & veteran's benefits

Q *But, if I wasn't the only one to have sex with her, I'm off the hook, right?*

A **Wrong.** If the court finds you to be the father, you can't escape your legal responsibilities, even if:

- ~ you are a minor;
- ~ your girlfriend had sex with other guys;
- ~ she told you she was taking the pill;
- ~ you wanted her to have an abortion or to put the baby up for adoption;
- ~ she decides not to marry you;
- ~ you don't see her anymore.

And if you don't pay, the State can:

- ~ take money from your paycheck or unemployment check;
- ~ take you to court for not paying
- ~ garnish your bank accounts;
- ~ order you to repay all or part of any public assistance paid to your child;
- ~ place a lien against your car or property & sell it to settle your debt;
- ~ take any state or federal income tax refunds due to you

Q *But there's nothing in it for me, right?*

A **Wrong.** These same laws are there for you, too. These laws give you the opportunity to take an active role in raising your child. We understand both you and the mother want the best for your child.

Even if you and your child's mother are not together as a couple, you both have an important role as the parents!

Q *I'd better find out more about my rights and responsibilities as a father under Connecticut law, right?*

A **Yes,** that would be a good first step. Contact your local DSS Child Support office and talk with a worker about your situation. They will know how to help you. The numbers are listed in this pamphlet.