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**Establish Paternity  
For Your Child...  
And For You!**



***Questions and Answers for Moms***

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# CONGRATULATIONS ON BECOMING A MOTHER!

This booklet has been written for mothers who are not legally married to the father of their baby. There is also a booklet like this one written for fathers. As you read you will find out what paternity is, why it should be established, and how easy it is to do.

Paternity is the legal identification of the father of a child. Each hospital and birthing center in Connecticut is required by law to offer unmarried parents the opportunity to establish their baby's paternity immediately after the birth of their child. To establish paternity of a child, the mother and the father must sign the form called *Acknowledgment of Paternity*. **The father's information cannot be placed on the birth certificate unless he completes and signs this form.**

Both you and the father must sign the form in front of a notary public, so you need to have a photo id with you. Hospitals have notary services and will let you know when someone will be available to notarize the form.

Your baby's paternity is not established until both you and the father sign the acknowledgment and it is filed with the Department of Public Health.

You will find a sample copy of what a completed form looks like at the end of this book. If you have questions about the form, please talk to hospital staff. They have been trained to help parents establish paternity.

If you would like information about child support services, please call the Connecticut Department of Social Services Child Support unit nearest you. A list of the office addresses and telephone numbers is on page 15. *These offices can also help you establish paternity for free if you do not do it at the hospital, or if you have other children whose paternity has not yet been established.*

Remember, the father's information as biological father of the child will not be placed on the birth certificate unless you both sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*. Signing this form legally establishes him as the biological father of your baby.

We wish you and your baby much health and happiness!

Sincerely,

Your local hospital ,  
The Department of Social Services, and  
The Department of Public Health

# ESTABLISH PATERNITY...

## *for your child's sake!*

### ***Paternity? What's that?***

Paternity means legal fatherhood.

Establishing paternity means legally determining the biological father of a child.

When parents are not married, paternity can be established by the mother and the father voluntarily signing a paternity form.

The mother signs the affirmation portion of the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*. The father signs the acknowledgment section of the same form. There is a sample copy of the form at the end of this book.

Signing this form shows that both parents agree that they are the child's biological parents. This form must then be filed with the Paternity Registry at the Department of Public Health (DPH). If you complete the form at the hospital or at DSS, the staff will forward the form to DPH for you.



### ***What's so important about establishing paternity?***

Raising a child takes a lot of hard work, time and money, but it is very rewarding. Children grow up healthy when they have lots of love and attention from two involved parents.

There are many benefits for your child and for you when you establish paternity. Paternity gives your child...

- a chance to have a relationship with both parents - you all deserve the opportunity to teach, love, and inspire each other
- a sense of family identity & belonging
- the chance to learn about health or medical problems that exist in your family which may not show up at birth or in childhood
- financial and economic benefits, such as child support payments, health insurance, Social Security, pensions and veterans benefits
- the right to inherit when mother or father dies

***What about my child's birth certificate?  
Can the father's name go on it?***

The father's information is only included on the child's birth certificate when both you and the father sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* and it gets filed at the Department of Public Health.

If you are not married to your baby's father, and you do not complete the form, then only your name and the child's name will appear on the birth certificate and the father's name will not appear.

Remember, the child's birth certificate is an important document, and will show legal paternity after the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* form is signed by both you and the father and filed at the Department of Public Health.

When you fill out the birth certificate forms it is important to both you and your child that the information be as accurate and complete as possible. Your child's birth certificate will be used throughout his or her life.

It is the document most often used to prove the child's full given name, place of birth, and date of birth. The birth certificate also gives information about names and other personal items of identification needed to prove citizenship, to get a passport, and to allow someone to inherit when a parent dies.

It is also used for school registration, work permits, a driver's license, employment, military enlistment, a marriage license, public assistance benefits, retirement pensions, and Social Security benefits.

***Will the father have to pay child support  
if we sign the form?***

The father only has to pay child support if the court enters an order for child support payments. By signing the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* form the father is agreeing that the child is his. As the father, he is legally responsible for supporting the child in accordance with the *Connecticut Child Support and Arrearage Guidelines*. The amount of child support to be paid is based on each parent's income and expenses.

The father may also be responsible for helping with day care expenses and providing health insurance for the child, if it is available at a reasonable cost.

Copies of the *Connecticut Child Support Guidelines* are available at the Superior Court Clerk's office nearest you.

## ***How do I establish paternity for my child?***

There's two ways to establish paternity when parents are not legally married:

- (1) you and the father can voluntarily establish paternity by completing the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* form at the hospital or a local DSS office; once it is signed by both parents, paternity will be legally established and the form will be sent to the Department of Public Health (DPH) for filing in the Paternity Registry
- (2) paternity can be established through legal procedures in a Connecticut Superior Court; this will cost money and takes longer than completing an acknowledgment

## ***Where can I complete the Acknowledgment of Paternity form?***

You and your child's father can complete the form for free in the hospital when your child is born. It's also free to do the form at a local Department of Social Services (DSS) office. And you can do the form at DSS even if you aren't receiving services from them.

You and the father can also complete the form at several community-based organizations around Connecticut. Call (860) 424-5997 to find out where these agencies are located.

You can complete the form at the customer window at the Department of Public Health in Hartford, but if you do the form there, you will have to pay \$25 to change your child's birth certificate.

## ***Do I have to name the father of my child?***

No one will require that you name the father when you are at the hospital, but you will need to name the father if you want his information on the birth certificate. If you apply for public assistance from the state, the law requires that you name the father. If you do not want to name him for some reason, your DSS worker will explain the exemption policy to you.



***What if I have questions about the form,  
or about paternity?***

The Notice of Rights and Responsibilities is part of the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* form. It explains what is expected of both you and your baby's father. The hospital staff will give you an opportunity to read the notice and then talk with you and the father about it.

A copy of this notice can be found at the end of this booklet on page 19. If you need more help, hospital staff can let you know where to go to get your questions answered.

They will also know how to complete the form, and can answer other questions you may have.

**DSS Child Support staff can also answer your questions, even if you are not receiving state assistance.**

***What about my child's name?***

When you and the father of your child complete the birth certificate worksheet together, hopefully you will agree on the child's first, middle and last name.

As the mother, you make the final name choices (*first, middle and last*) for your child.

Contact the  
Department of Public Health  
at (860) 509-7700  
if you have questions about  
naming your baby.



***Where is the Department of Public Health located?***

DPH is located in Hartford, Connecticut. Call them with questions about birth certificates or the Paternity Registry:

**Connecticut Department of Public Health  
Vital Records Section  
410 Capitol Avenue, 1st Floor,  
MS#11VRS  
P.O. Box 340308  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308  
TELEPHONE: (860) 509-7958**

## ***How long will it take to include the father's name on my child's birth certificate?***

If paternity is not established at the hospital at the time of your child's birth, and it is completed after the birth certificate has been transmitted by the hospital, the Department of Public Health (DPH) will create a new birth certificate that includes the father's information. However, this process can take several months to complete.



Changes to the birth certificate will not be seen automatically. It takes time for the records to be changed.

We realize that it can be frustrating to wait for such an important document. If the establishment of paternity is the reason for the change, though, *it's worth the wait!*

Having the father's and mother's information on the birth certificate will be important to your child as he or she goes through life.

## ***What other services are available ?***

Full child support services are available to the custodial and noncustodial parent. ***The custodial parent is the parent who lives with the child and the noncustodial parent is the parent who doesn't live with the child.***

Services include:

- location of parent
- paternity establishment (includes genetic testing)
- support order establishment and modification
- enforcement and collection of court orders

Call the DSS office nearest you and ask the Child Support Unit to send you an application for child support services. On your appointment date, bring the completed application with you to the interview. A child support worker will go over the paperwork with you. All of these services are provided already if you are receiving public assistance.



## ***What if we aren't sure he is the biological father?***

If one or both of you is unsure about paternity, you should not sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* until you get a genetic test (also known as a DNA test) to find out whether or not he is the biological father of the child.

Call the local DSS Child Support office and let them know you want to apply for services and the first service you and the father would ask for is a DNA test to determine paternity.

You, the father, and the child all have to be tested. The lab uses a test called the Buccal Swab. The Swab looks like a Q-tip, and the lab technician will run it along the inside your facial cheek to get cells for testing. It is 99.9% accurate and will prove if he is or is not the father of the child.



## ***Who pays for the genetic (DNA) testing?***

If the father asks for the genetic testing or the court orders genetic testing and he is found to be the father, he may have to pay for it unless the court finds that he has no ability to pay.

If you aren't involved with the court system but want to take a DNA test, you can look for labs that do DNA testing in the yellow pages of your phone book.

*When you call, ask if the lab does paternity testing. If they do, you can discuss cost and a payment plan with them.*

You can also apply for child support services from DSS, and the first service you and the father would ask for is a DNA test to determine paternity.

In any case, you, the father and the baby all have to be tested. They use a method called Buccal Swab. The swab is like a Q-tip, and they wipe it in your cheek to get cells for testing. It is very accurate.

If you have additional questions, call the Child Support unit at your local DSS office - the phone numbers are on page 15 of this booklet.

## ***I'm not even 18 yet. What do I do?***

As the mother of the child, you can still sign your part of an *Acknowledgment of Paternity* that will be legally binding even though you are under 18 years old.

**Remember, if you are not sure about the paternity of your child, an acknowledgment should not be completed. Genetic testing is available and is very accurate.**

You may want to talk it over with an adult before you sign an acknowledgment.





***I am going to marry someone else and he is going to adopt my child, so why establish paternity?***

Adoptions can take a long time. Sometimes plans to marry fall through. In the meantime, your child is entitled to child support and the other benefits that come with establishing paternity. For example, It is important that paternity is established so that the medical history of both sides of the family can be known, in case your child has a medical problem later in life.



***My child's father is unemployed. Why should I establish paternity?***

As parents, you are both responsible for supporting your child emotionally, financially, socially, and mentally. He may not have a job now, but his situation could change.

The court may require him to get a job so that he can contribute to his child's financial support. He may be required to make payments if he is collecting unemployment benefits. You should establish paternity whether or not the father is employed.

**Establishing paternity involves more than child support. It gives both parents rights to the child, and the opportunity to strengthen the bond between parents and children!**

***My child's father is still in school and doesn't have a job. Why should I establish paternity?***

Every parent has the responsibility to support his or her child in every way possible.

He's a student now, but someday he'll be out of school and working. The court may require him to get a job so that he can contribute to his child's financial support even while he is in school.

You should establish paternity whether or not the father is working. *He can help provide the love and support your baby needs even if he doesn't have a job.*

***Do I need to establish paternity if the father and I are getting along and he is helping support our child?***

Yes, you should establish paternity. Even if the father is supporting the child now, you may even be living together, the situation may change.

*If something happens to you, and the father of your child has not established paternity, he will not be recognized as the legal father.*

Your child cannot gain benefits such as Social Security, health and life insurance, veterans' and survivor's benefits unless you establish paternity.



***Do I have to name the child's father and establish paternity?***

You must name the child's father if you receive public assistance from the State. If you're not sure who the father is, the DSS Child Support staff can help you.

You will be asked questions by child support staff or staff from the State Attorney General's office about the man or men who may be the father so they can be contacted.

It is important that you give as much correct information as possible. If you refuse to name the father, or refuse to help in the process of establishing paternity, you may not be granted public assistance, or you could be taken off and your case closed.

If you do not receive public assistance and have requested child support services to establish or collect child support payments, no action can be taken unless you name the child's father.

*Paternity must be established before payment of child support can be ordered.*

***Can we sign an Acknowledgment of Paternity form at a later date?***



Yes. **You can sign the form at a later date.**

If you apply for public assistance, you will be required to sign the mother's part of the form if you haven't done so already. The man you name as father will be contacted to establish paternity as well.

**If you and the father of your child do sign an *Acknowledgment of Paternity* later, a new birth certificate will be prepared for your child that will include information provided by you and the father. The father's information will be added to the new birth certificate. You and the father may also change your child's name at this time.**

You and the father will be notified when the new birth certificate is available at the town hall. The new birth certificate will be available in the town where the child was born, and/or in the town where you lived when you gave birth.

***Will establishing paternity guarantee the father access and custody?***

No. Signing the acknowledgment does not guarantee access and custody.

**However, by acknowledging paternity, the father gets legal rights to his child, which gives him the opportunity to be involved in the child's life and to develop a strong, loving relationship. Children thrive when two parents are providing guidance and support in all aspects of their lives.**

Hopefully, if you are not living together as a couple, you and the child's father will agree about sharing time with your child.

After paternity has been established, you and the father have the right to go to court and have the Superior Court decide on access and custody.

Judicial Branch Family Services Unit staff are available to answer your questions about custody. Office locations and phone numbers are provided on page 16 of this booklet.





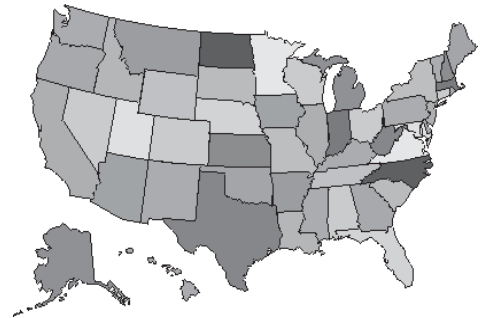
***We were using birth control, this pregnancy wasn't planned. Will the father of my child still be responsible for child support?***

Even if the pregnancy was unplanned, both parents are legally responsible for supporting the child. It doesn't matter whether you agreed to the pregnancy or not. Both you and the father have a responsibility to give your child emotional and financial support. Your child needs both of you!

***Will he have to pay child support if he doesn't live in the same state as his child?***

Yes. All states have laws to collect child support payments from a father who lives in another state.

If you have a child support order, DSS staff will ask the state where the father lives to enforce it. If a child support order has not been established, the child support staff will start the process to get one.



***Paternity must be established before any action can be taken.***

***What if I need child support but am not receiving any payments?***

If there is a court order for child support and it is not being paid, the law is being broken. Most court orders require immediate income withholding, so if he is working, money will be withheld from his paycheck.

If you are receiving child support services from the state, the Support Enforcement Division (SED) or the DSS Child Support unit can take court action against him. His federal and state income tax refund can be taken, a lien can be put on his property, he may be reported to a credit bureau, and he may be brought before the court for civil contempt or criminal non support. The court could order him to go to jail.

***If my child's father does not want to sign the paternity form, will he still have to pay child support?***



If public assistance is provided to your child at any time, or if you request child support services from DSS, the state will attempt to establish paternity.

Once paternity is established, if you are the custodial parent and the father is the noncustodial parent, he will be asked to pay support.

If the father denies paternity, the state will take the case to court to establish paternity through court-ordered genetic testing and, if he is found to be the biological father, a child support order may be entered.

If public assistance is not being provided to your child and you have not requested child support services, you can go to court on your own or hire an attorney to help you legally establish paternity. If your case goes to court, the court can order genetic tests for you, your child and the alleged father, to determine if he is the father. Genetic testing is very accurate.

If the court finds that he is the father, he will most likely be ordered by the court to pay child support and provide health insurance for your child, based on his ability to pay.

***Where can I get legal advice?***

The staff at the hospital or DSS can give you information, but they cannot give you legal advice.

Child support services available from the State do not include legal assistance concerning visitation and custody. For legal advice, you should consult an attorney. The information in this booklet is based on laws in effect in the State of Connecticut as of October 1, 1997.

***I know I can establish paternity for my newborn at the hospital, but how can I establish paternity for my other child(ren)?***

If you have not yet established paternity for an older child or children, you and the child's father can sign the form **at any time** for those children. Remember, it's just as important for older children to have their paternity established as it is for babies.

Hospital staff **cannot** help you with paternity for your older children the way they can for your new baby, but you can go to your local DSS office, *even if you do not need any services from them*, and complete the form **for free**.

You can also contact the Department of Public Health (DPH) - if you complete the form with DPH, you will be charged \$25 as a processing fee for changes to the birth certificate.

Call the DSS office nearest you if you have **ANY** questions about establishing paternity for your baby or older children. DSS regional office addresses and telephone numbers are listed on page 15.

***The father is already named as the father on my child's birth certificate. Doesn't this mean he's the legal father?***

Before June 1, 1998, an unmarried mother could name a man as the biological father without doing paternity paperwork and his name was put on the birth certificate. He is considered the father on the birth record.

This is not the same thing as being the legal father of the child. In order to have rights to the child he and the mother have to establish legal paternity by signing the acknowledgment form.

**The law changed on June 1, 1998.** If your baby was born after this date, the father's information cannot be included on the birth record unless the mother and he legally acknowledge paternity by signing the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* form.

***Remember...***

If you complete the form at the hospital before the birth record is created then the father's information will go on the birth certificate.

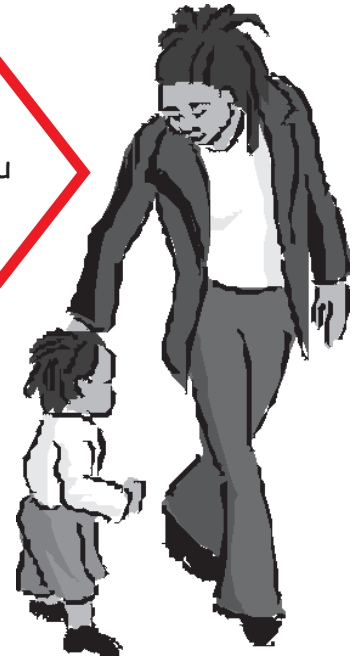
If you don't complete the acknowledgment at the hospital, the birth certificate will only have information about you and your child on it. The space for father's information will say "not stated".

If you do the form at a later date, the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* still needs to be submitted to the Department of Public Health (DPH). The new information will be added and DPH will notify both you and the father when the new birth certificate is ready at the town/city hall. If you live with your child's father one letter gets sent to your address, but if you and the father live apart, each of you will get a letter.

***Where can I get more information about child support services?***

If you want general information about child support services the Connecticut Department of Social Services has an automated telephone line called VOICES. Call toll-free **1-888-233-7223** anytime between 6:00 a.m. and midnight, seven days a week. (You need a "tone" push button telephone.)

If you would like to apply for child support services, or if you have specific questions about establishing paternity or child support services, please call the office listed below nearest where you live.



<b>Bridgeport:</b>	<b>925 Housatonic Ave., 06604;</b>	<b>(203) 551-2703</b>
<b>Danbury:</b>	<b>342 Main St., 06810;</b>	<b>(203) 207-8986</b>
<b>Hartford:</b>	<b>3580 Main St., 06120;</b>	<b>(860) 723-1002</b>
<b>Manchester:</b>	<b>699 E. Middle Turnpike, 06040;</b>	<b>(860) 647-1441</b>
<b>Middletown:</b>	<b>117 Main St. Ext., 06457;</b>	<b>(860) 704-3126</b>
<b>New Britain:</b>	<b>270 Lafayette St., 06053;</b>	<b>(860) 612-3465</b>
<b>New Haven:</b>	<b>194 Bassett St., 06511;</b>	<b>(203) 974-8248</b>
<b>Norwich:</b>	<b>401 W. Thames St. Unit 102, 06360;</b>	<b>(203) 823-3325</b>
<b>Stamford:</b>	<b>1642 Bedford St., 06905;</b>	<b>(203) 251-9417</b>
<b>Torrington:</b>	<b>62 Commercial Blvd., 06790;</b>	<b>(860) 496-6944</b>
<b>Waterbury:</b>	<b>249 Thomaston Ave., 06702;</b>	<b>(203) 597-4171</b>
<b>Willimantic:</b>	<b>676 Main St., 06226;</b>	<b>(860) 465-3500</b>

***What about access, parenting time, and custody regarding my child?***

Access, parenting time (also referred to as "visitation") and custody is handled by the Judicial Branch Family Services Unit. If you have specific questions about this issue please call the office listed below nearest where you live.

<b>Bridgeport:</b>	<b>1061 Main St., 06601;</b>	<b>(203) 579-6513</b>
<b>Bristol:</b>	<b>131 N. Main St., 06010;</b>	<b>(860) 583-1835</b>
<b>Danbury:</b>	<b>146 White St., 06810;</b>	<b>(203) 207-8615</b>
<b>Derby:</b>	<b>106 Elizabeth St., 06418;</b>	<b>(203) 735-9595</b>
<b>Enfield:</b>	<b>111 Phoenix St., 06082;</b>	<b>(860) 741-3697</b>
<b>Hartford:</b>	<b>90 Washington St., 06106;</b>	<b>(860) 706-5170</b>
<b>Litchfield:</b>	<b>Commons, Route 202, 06759;</b>	<b>(860) 567-9463</b>
<b>Manchester:</b>	<b>410 Central St., 06040;</b>	<b>(860) 643-2481</b>
<b>Meriden:</b>	<b>54 West St., 06450;</b>	<b>(860) 238-6140</b>
<b>Middletown:</b>	<b>1 Court St., 06457;</b>	<b>(860) 343-6460</b>
<b>Milford:</b>	<b>14 West River St., 06460;</b>	<b>(203) 877-0001</b>
<b>New Britain:</b>	<b>20 Franklin Square, 06053;</b>	<b>(860) 515-5115</b>
<b>New Haven:</b>	<b>235 Church St., 06510;</b>	<b>(203) 503-6820</b>
<b>New London:</b>	<b>70 Huntington St., 06320;</b>	<b>(860) 443-2826</b>
<b>Norwalk:</b>	<b>17 Belden Ave., 06852;</b>	<b>(203) 847-5826</b>
<b>Putnam:</b>	<b>265 Kennedy Drive, 06260;</b>	<b>(860) 928-0478</b>
<b>Stamford:</b>	<b>123 Hoyt St., 06905;</b>	<b>(203) 965-5282</b>
<b>Vernon:</b>	<b>428 Hartford Tpke., 06066;</b>	<b>(860) 872-4088</b>
<b>Waterbury:</b>	<b>300 Grand St., 06702;</b>	<b>(203) 591-3325</b>



STATE OF CONNECTICUT-DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
VITAL RECORDS SECTION - PATERNITY REGISTRY  
**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF PATERNITY**

**INTRODUCTION**

Children need and benefit from the active involvement of both parents in their daily lives. By acknowledging paternity via this form, unmarried fathers take the first step toward establishing important legal rights and benefits for their children.

Establishing paternity means legally determining the father of a child. Connecticut law provides that in order for a father's name to appear on a birth certificate, paternity must be established. If the parents are not married to each other, the mother and biological father must sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* to establish paternity.

Completion of this *Acknowledgment of Paternity* at the time of birth or at any time after birth is voluntary, and indicates that the parents wish to acknowledge paternity and have the acknowledged father recorded on the birth certificate.

The *Acknowledgment of Paternity* may be completed by unmarried parents prior to the preparation and filing of the child's birth certificate. Persons responsible for the preparation and filing of birth records are required to accept the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* up to 10 days from discharge as a basis for including information about the father on the birth certificate.

If paternity is established after a birth certificate has been created, this form must be submitted to the Paternity Registry at the Department of Public Health (please reference instructions at bottom of this page). A fee of \$25.00 is required to amend the birth certificate. The check or money order should be made payable to the Treasurer, State of Connecticut, and forwarded along with **the original (white) copy** to the Paternity Registry at the address listed below.

NOTE: Once paternity has been established through completion of the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*, the birth certificate will be amended to include the father's information and any resulting changes to the child's name identified on the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**Before completing the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*, please read these instructions and the NOTICE OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES on the back of the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*.**

**ALL FIELDS ON THE FORM MUST BE COMPLETED. IF THE INFORMATION ASKED FOR DOES NOT APPLY TO YOU, ENTER "N/A".**

1. If you have any questions, you should talk with an attorney. Information concerning state child support services can be obtained from any local office of the Connecticut Department of Social Services (DSS), Bureau of Child Support Enforcement. The address of the local DSS office nearest you can be found in the blue pages of a local telephone book.
2. **Print** all information requested except for your signature. **Use a black ball point pen** and press hard enough to make the copies.
3. **Fill in all spaces.** List your health insurance company, even if it will not cover the hospital bill for the child's birth. If you do not have health insurance, put "none" in that space.
4. If you are completing the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* away from the hospital, remember to sign it in front of an authorized official. You may do this in another state. Leave all pages together until both parents have signed.
5. Both parents must sign their legal names on this form **in front of a notary public**, or other officer, as noted on the form. Show the notary or other officer a photo identification of yourself, such as your driver's license, motor vehicle identification card, or school identification card. If you are completing this form at the hospital or birthing center when your child is born, tell the staff when you are ready to sign it. They will assist you with obtaining the services of a notary public.
6. Next to your signature, put the date you actually signed the form. It does not have to be the same date the other parent signed.

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After this form has been completed, signed, and **sworn to** by both parents, each parent should keep the copy designated at the bottom of the form. The completed **original (white)** copy must be sent to the address listed below. If this form is being completed at a hospital or a local DSS office, the hospital or DSS office will forward it to DPH. If you are completing the form on your own or with the assistance of an attorney, you or the attorney must send the **original (white)** copy, along with the \$25.00 fee, to the Department of Public Health.

Connecticut Department of Public Health  
Vital Records Section - Paternity Registry  
410 Capitol Avenue- MS#11VRS  
P. O. Box 340308  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308  
Telephone: (860) 509-7958

*Acknowledgment of Paternity*  
**NOTICE OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**  
**Read all sections before you sign the form.**

When this *Acknowledgment of Paternity* form is properly signed by the mother and the father of the child, it establishes important rights and responsibilities for the parents, and important rights for the child. Pursuant to section 46b-172 of the Connecticut General Statutes, an *Acknowledgment of Paternity* executed and sworn to by the mother and the father is a legal finding of paternity and is binding on both parents, whether adult or minor.

**MOTHER'S RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. You do not have to sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*.
2. You should sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* only if you know who is the father of your child. If you are unsure who is the father, you should not sign the form. Genetic (DNA) testing may be able to establish paternity with a high degree of accuracy, and may, under certain circumstances, be available at state expense.
3. The father's name will not appear on the birth certificate unless you and the father sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*.
4. If you and the father sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*, it will be filed with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Vital Records Section-Paternity Registry, and the father's name will be placed on the birth certificate. The *Acknowledgment of Paternity* is considered a legal finding of paternity. Your child will then have a legal father.
5. As the legal father, the man you name in the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* may obtain rights of custody and visitation.
6. Your child will have the right to receive support from the father at least until the child's eighteenth birthday.
7. Your child may be eligible for many other benefits from the father such as health insurance, social security, veteran's benefits, and the right of inheritance.

**FATHER'S RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. You do not have to sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*. You should sign only if you are sure you are the father of the child. Your name will not be placed on the birth certificate unless you sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*.
2. You have the right to deny paternity and to have a trial by the Superior Court or a Family Support Magistrate.
3. You have the right to speak with an attorney before signing an *Acknowledgment of Paternity*. In addition, if there is a trial concerning the paternity of a child, you have the right to have an attorney represent you and, if you cannot afford an attorney, you can ask the court to appoint one for you.
4. You have the right to a genetic (DNA) test to determine paternity. Genetic (DNA) testing may be able to establish paternity with a high degree of accuracy, and may, under certain circumstances, be available at state expense.
5. If you and the mother sign the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*, it will be filed with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Vital Records Section-Paternity Registry and your name will be placed on the birth certificate. The *Acknowledgment of Paternity* is considered a legal finding of paternity. You will then be the legal father of the child.
6. As the legal father of the child, you may obtain rights of custody and visitation, you will be liable for the child's financial support, at least until the child's eighteenth birthday, and you may also be liable for the child's medical and dental bills. If you do not support your child, a civil or criminal court case may be brought against you, and the court can order that your income be withheld.
7. The child will be given many rights and benefits which the child may otherwise not have, such as the right to inherit from you, as the legal father, and be eligible to receive health insurance, social security, or veteran's benefits.

**RESCISSION**

1. The mother or the father may rescind the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* within 60 days of signing the *Acknowledgment of Paternity* by contacting the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Vital Records Section-Paternity Registry or any local office of the Connecticut Department of Social Services, Bureau of Child Support Enforcement, and completing a *Rescission of Acknowledgment of Paternity* form (Form VS-57). The address of the local DSS office nearest you can be found in the blue pages of a local telephone book. After signing the VS-57 form in front of a notary public or other authorized official, forward the original to: Connecticut Department of Public Health, Vital Records Section-Paternity Registry, 410 Capitol Avenue, First Floor, MS #11VRS, P.O. Box 340308, Hartford CT 06134-0308.
2. If the mother or the father signs the *Rescission of Acknowledgment of paternity* (VS-57 form), the father's name will be removed from the birth certificate and he will no longer be considered the legal father of the child.
3. After 60 days from the signing of the *Acknowledgment of Paternity*, the father's name will be removed from the birth certificate only by order of the court. An *Acknowledgment of Paternity* may be challenged in the court or before a Family Support Magistrate after the 60-day rescission period only on the basis of fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact, with the burden of proof upon the person making the challenge.

**IF EITHER ONE OF YOU IS NOT ABSOLUTELY SURE OF THIS CHILD'S PATERNITY, YOU SHOULD NOT SIGN THIS *Acknowledgment of Paternity*.** If you have any questions you should talk with an attorney.

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

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