



From a Child's Mother

Raising a child today is not easy. It is more difficult if you are an unwed mother, but it can be manageable if the father legally acknowledges paternity and provides the child with financial assistance.

I used to assure concerned friends and family that my situation was different from other unwed mothers because my boyfriend "Paul" and I were in a loving relationship. He was even going to be with me in the delivery room for the birth of our baby! Yet six weeks after our daughter was born, our relationship broke down. Paul simply wasn't ready for the emotional and physical demands of caring for a newborn, much less marriage.

Like many unwed mothers, I believed I could afford to raise my child alone. But it didn't take long to realize I couldn't manage financially. My daughter was ill during her first months and medical bills rolled in.

I assumed Paul's name would be on the birth certificate since he was with me in the delivery room. I was shocked to see the line for the father's name was blank. That's when I realized my daughter deserved much more in life. She was entitled to her father's name on her birth certificate as well as his financial support.

As a mother, I urge you to think of your child's needs first. Please consider the importance of having your child's paternity established and the benefits of child support services. Every child deserves a father and to be well cared for. And every child deserves the love of both parents.

Unmarried Parents

FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAKE...



Establish Paternity



Colorado Department of Human Services
people who help people

Paternity Matters

For you ... AND your child!

303-830-3572



What is Paternity

**Paternity means
fatherhood.**

**If parents are not married,
it is important that
paternity be legally established.
Otherwise, the baby has no legal
father.**

How Can Paternity Be Established?

An acknowledgement of paternity may be signed at the hospital when the child is born. This process allows paternity to be established without going to Court. The Court or the Child Support Enforcement office in your county can also legally establish paternity.

Why Establish Paternity?

▶ IDENTITY

All children have the right to know their mother and father.

▶ MEDICAL

Every child needs to know if he or she has inherited any special health problems.

▶ HEALTH INSURANCE

It might be possible to obtain medical insurance for the child through the father's employer, union, or military service.

▶ CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

In order to get child support, paternity must be established. If either parent fails to support the child, child support services are available for a fee of \$20 through the local child support agency in each county in Colorado. These services include locating either of the child's parents, establishing paternity, obtaining a support order and collecting child support payments. Also, either parent may hire a private attorney.

▶ SURVIVOR'S BENEFITS

If the father dies, his child could qualify for benefits including Social Security, pensions, inheritance rights, veteran's benefits and life insurance.

Why Should a Father Support

His Child? Establishing paternity is the right thing to do. Every father who brings a child into the world should accept his share of the financial, legal and emotional responsibility. Through active involvement, the child sees the father as a provider and role model.

How Long After a Child is Born Can Paternity Be Established?

Colorado law allows a paternity action to be started anytime before the child reaches the age of 18 and in some circumstances up to age 21.

Can Paternity Be Established Even if the Father Lives in Another State?

Paternity can be established if the father lives out of state, but it may take more time. These services are available through the local child support agency in each county in Colorado.

Does the Father Have a Right to Parenting Time?

Parenting time can be arranged informally between the mother and the father or set by the Court. If there is a disagreement, the Court would have to settle this matter.

