



PATERNITY AND PARENTAGE

# Paternity and Parentage



Oregon Department of Justice

**Oregon Child Support Program**

# How is Paternity or Parentage Established?

**Paternity is the legal determination of a father. Parentage is the legal determination of a parent.**

Often, a child must have two legal parents before a child support order can be started. Paternity or parentage can be established in several ways:

- » **Marital Presumption** – If a child is born during a marriage, or within 300 days after the termination of the marriage, the spouse is presumed to be the parent (the presumption can be rebutted).
- » **Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity** – The father and an unmarried mother can complete a Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form.
- » **Paternity Proceedings** – A legal process to determine the legal father of a child. If parentage is at issue, a person claiming to be the father of a child under the age of 18 can apply for establishment of paternity through the Oregon Child Support Program. There may be some circumstances where we are unable to assist the applicant. If a paternity action is started, the parties can request free genetic testing.
- » **Adoption** – When a person legally adopts a child, the court enters an order establishing them as the parent.

# Paternity Establishment Services

**Oregon Child Support Program offices across the state offer paternity-related services:**

- » Free genetic testing to determine the biological father
- » Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity forms and information
- » Free notary services
- » Filing of the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity Form with Vital Records and paying of fees
- » Establishment of paternity through administrative or judicial processes

## Benefits of Establishing Paternity

If a child's father is not on the birth certificate, the child may not be eligible to receive important medical information, benefits, and certain rights. Establishing paternity:

- » May allow a child access to the father's insurance, and to Social Security, veterans, inheritance, and other benefits
- » May help doctors manage a child's health by allowing access to the father's medical history
- » May help to recognize and identify a child's unique heritage

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## Oregon Child Support Program

Supporting Parents  
to Support Children



800-850-0228

[OregonChildSupport.gov](http://OregonChildSupport.gov)