



Welcome

- We will start the webinar at 1:30 PM
- Please **mute** your phone to avoid background noises during the meeting
- Please **do not** put the call on hold (everyone will hear the hold music during the session)



EARLY PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT EDUCATION FOR UNMARRIED, EXPECTANT PARENTS

Training Webinar for Service Providers

February 9, 2017

Hello!

I am Ellen Wood

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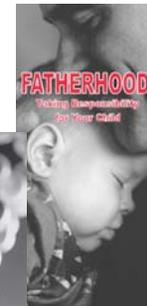
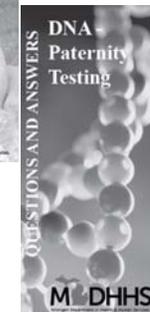
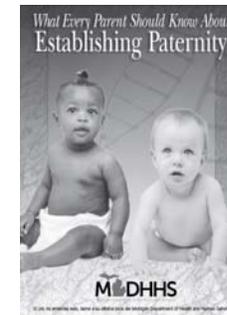
Housekeeping



- Webinar will be listen-only
- Questions:
 - We will take all questions during the last 30 minutes of the webinar
 - At any time during the webinar, you can type your questions in the Note box in the lower-right corner of the webinar screen
 - We'll answer all questions in order as they come in
- Please do not put the call on hold

Handouts

- PowerPoint presentation
- Sample *Affidavit of Parentage*
- *Unmarried Parent Checklist*
- Directions to the Hospital Resources page on michigan.gov
- Order form for paternity establishment and child support brochures and posters (all free!)
 - What Every Parent Should Know About Establishing Paternity
 - Fatherhood – Taking Responsibility for Your Child
 - DNA – Paternity Testing Questions and Answers



Your Efforts Matter!

- Paternity establishment helps families, one child at a time
- Education is the key to success

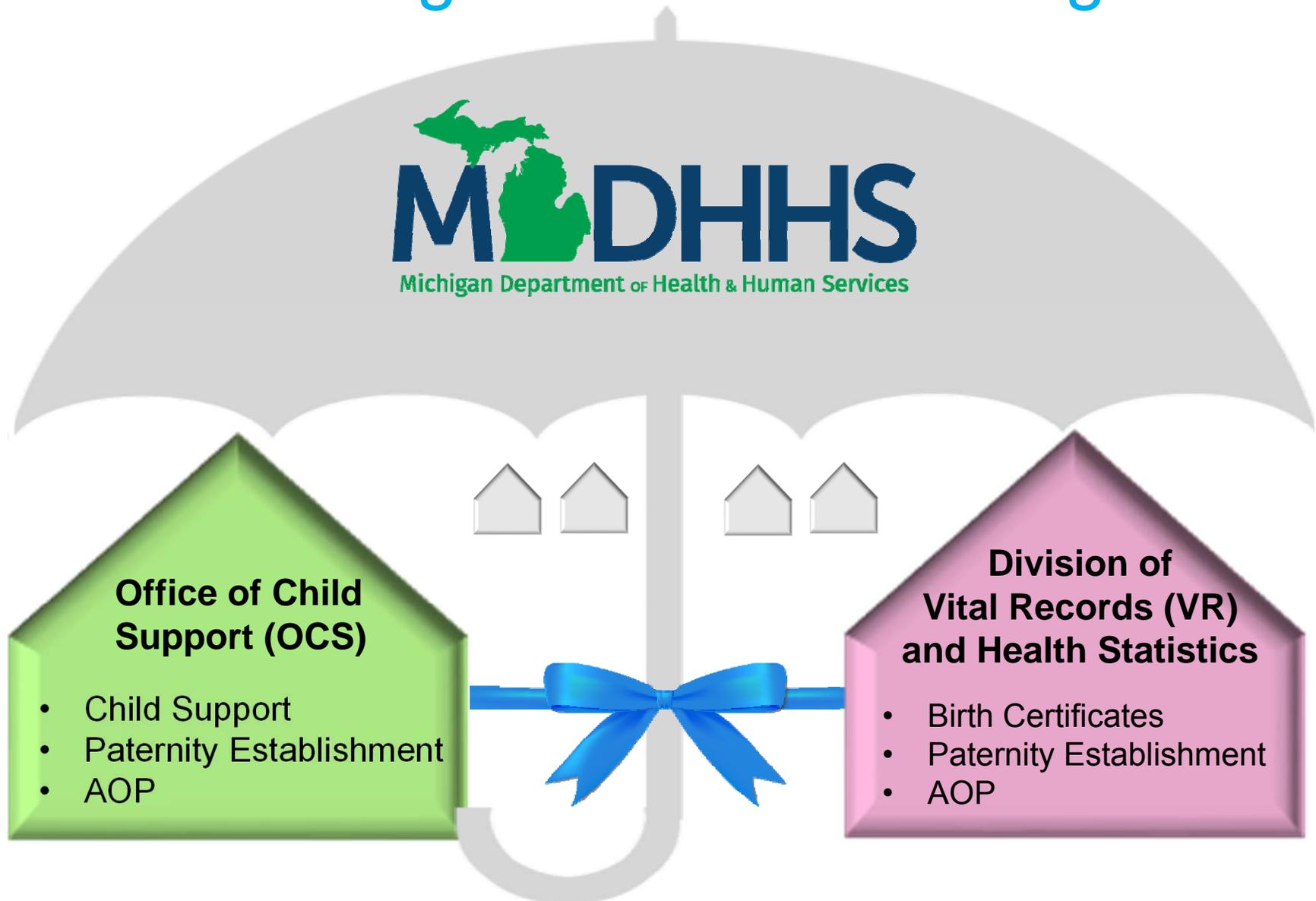


Agenda

- Understanding Partner Agencies
- The purpose and goal of Paternity Establishment Education for Unmarried, Expectant Parents
- What is Paternity Establishment?
- Why is Paternity Establishment so important?
- The benefits of Paternity Establishment
- Current hospital practices
 - Legal Requirements
 - Challenges
- What Does Paternity Establishment Education Involve?
- What you can do to help
- Resources
- Your Questions and Answers

UNDERSTANDING PARTNER AGENCIES

Understanding MDHHS Partner Agencies



PURPOSE AND GOAL

**Paternity Establishment Education for
Unmarried, Expectant Parents**

Goal

- To educate professionals who work with unmarried, expectant parents on the importance of paternity establishment.



Purpose

- To help unmarried, expectant parents understand what paternity establishment means so they are better prepared to make the fatherhood decision at the time of birth.



WHAT IS PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT?

What is Paternity Establishment?

- **Paternity = legal fatherhood** (not the same as biological fatherhood)
- When parents are married to each other, paternity is “presumed” - meaning the husband is automatically the legal father
- When the mother is not married, the child doesn't have a legal father until paternity is established



How is Paternity Established?

Marriage

- Husband is the legal father
- Only a judge can declare the husband not to be the legal father

Voluntarily - Affidavit of Parentage (AOP)

- Usually completed at the hospital, right after delivery
- May be completed at any time after leaving the hospital

Court Order

- A judge can declare a man to be a legal father
- Judgement usually based on DNA paternity tests showing the man is the biological father

Voluntary Paternity Establishment

- Unmarried parents can establish paternity by signing an Affidavit of Parentage (AOP)
 - Signing is voluntary
 - May be completed with the birth certificate in the hospital at the time of birth (it's free).
 - May be completed at a later time but there is a fee to add the father's name to the birth certificate.
 - Parents must show a valid, picture ID.
 - Parents **need to understand their rights and responsibilities** before signing the AOP.
 - The AOP should NOT be signed if either mom or dad is unsure about who the biological father is.

Court-ordered Paternity Establishment

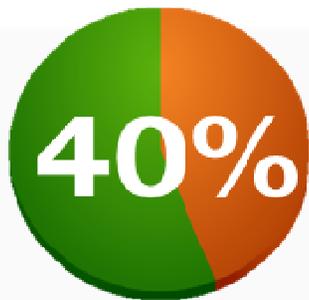
- Paternity may be established through the county court
- The court's decision is usually based on the results of DNA paternity testing
- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Child Support office can help (866-540-0008)



WHY IS PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT SO IMPORTANT?



4 *in* 10 children in the US
are born to unmarried
parents *each year*.



1.6 **MILLION** children were
born out of wedlock in 2014.
That's more than the population of
Philadelphia, the fifth largest city in the U.S.



Research shows that children living with a single parent (usually mom) are economically and socially disadvantaged. Children tend to do poorly in school, have more emotional problems and have more stressful experiences in their lives.



The Importance of FATHER INVOLVEMENT



Children who grow up with involved fathers are:

39%

more likely to earn mostly A's in school



45%

less likely to repeat a grade

60%

less likely to be suspended or expelled from school



2x

as likely to go to college and find stable employment after high school

75%

less likely to have a teen birth



80%

less likely to spend time in jail



BENEFITS OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

**Children supported by both parents have
the DADVANTAGE**

Sense of Identity



- Paternity Establishment gives a child **two** legal parents
- Both moms and dads play important roles in the growth and development of children
- Having both parents in a child's life gives them a sense of who they are and where they come from
- The father's name can only be included on the child's birth certificate if the parents establish paternity

Family Ties

- Fathers are more likely to be involved in their child's lives when paternity is established
- Having both parents in a child's life gives them a connection to both sides of the family
- Knowledge of family heritage can be gained from both sides



Financial Support

- When paternity is established, parents share financial responsibilities



Benefits

- A child has a right to benefits from both parents. These can include:
 - Health insurance
 - Social Security
 - Medical insurance
 - Veteran's benefits
 - Life insurance
 - Inheritance rights



Medical

- Knowing the medical histories of both biological parents can be important if the family has any health problems
- This information can give a child a healthy start



CURRENT HOSPITAL PRACTICES

- Legal Requirements
 - Challenges

Current Hospital Practices

- Legal requirement: State law (Michigan Compiled Law 333.21532) requires hospitals to participate in the acknowledgment of paternity, which includes helping parents:
 - Complete the AOP form
 - Understand their rights and responsibilities of signing
 - Know that signing the AOP is voluntary
- The AOP cannot be signed until after the baby is born – not before



In-hospital Paternity Establishment Challenges

- Dad isn't present
- Mom is usually exhausted
- Family on both sides are present
- **Dad doesn't have his ID**
- One or both are uncertain about who the biological father is
- One or both have concerns about Child Support involvement
- Parents may not have thought about or discussed paternity establishment beforehand
- Parents may not have thought about the long term benefits of paternity establishment

X Dads on the Dotted Line

Why Unmarried Dads Don't Establish Paternity



When a child is born to unmarried parents,



That child has no legal father until Dad establishes paternity.*



Dads can establish paternity by signing a form in the hospital when the child is born—but many don't.



3 in 10 unmarried dads don't sign

Why don't they sign?

And what should be done?

DADS WHO DON'T SIGN...

ARE NOT AT THE HOSPITAL WHEN THE FORM IS PRESENTED



58%

DO NOT THINK THAT PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT IS IMPORTANT

31%

DOUBT THAT THEY ARE THE BIOLOGICAL FATHER



24%



Importance of paternity

INCREASE EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH TO EXPECTANT PARENTS

Doubting dads



When dads don't show

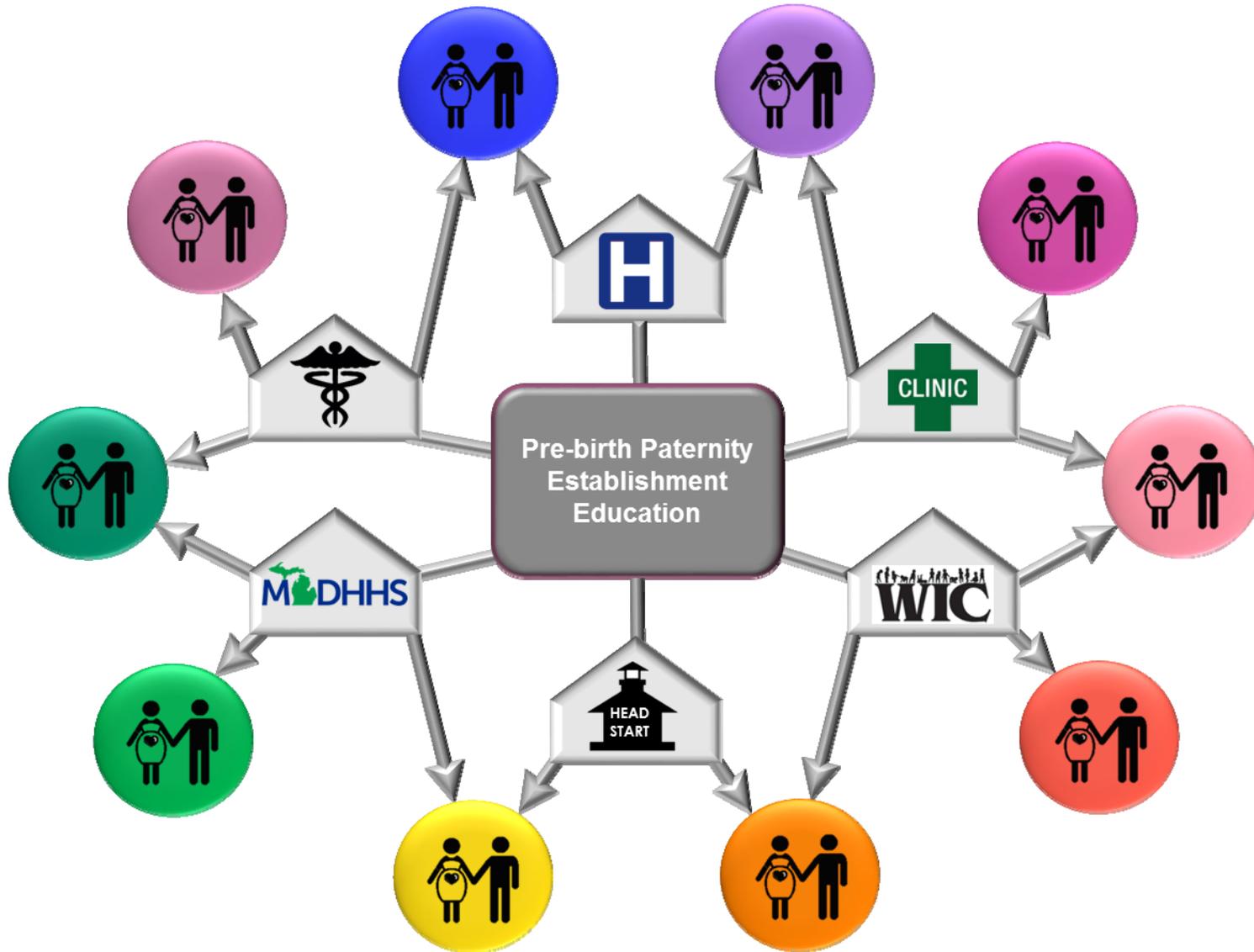


PROVIDE MOMS AT THE HOSPITAL WITH INFORMATION ABOUT:

- ALTERNATE MEANS OF ESTABLISHING PATERNITY
- APPLYING FOR CHILD SUPPORT

EARLY PATERNITY
ESTABLISHMENT EDUCATION
FOR UNMARRIED,
EXPECTANT PARENTS

Paternity Establishment Education Network



What Does Paternity Establishment Education Involve?

- Providing basic information about paternity establishment options
- Provide and display informational brochures and posters in patient waiting areas
- Explain the benefits of having both parents in their child's life
- Referrals for questions and more information
- **IMPORTANT: Paternity establishment education should not include any personal recommendations or legal advice**

What Do Unmarried Parents Need to Know?

- Basic information about the AOP form:
 - Signing is voluntary
 - Their rights and responsibilities
 - The legal consequences of signing
- Both parents must have ID
- Alternatives to signing the AOP (such as genetic testing)
- How to get further information
 - www.michigan.gov/childsupport
 - Phone number for a Support Specialist (SS)
866-540-0008

Where Should Paternity Education Happen?

- Wherever mom receives care while she is pregnant:
 - Delivering physicians offices
 - Obstetrics
 - Mother-baby unit
 - Birth Center, Birthing Services, Birthing Unit
 - Maternity Center
 - Education units:
 - Pregnancy, breast feeding, Lamaze, midwife, and doula services and classes



Where Should Paternity Education Happen?

- All kinds of agencies can help:
 - Private health care providers
 - Public health clinics
 - WIC, MCH, others
 - Department of Health and Human Services offices
 - Head Start and child care agencies
 - Professional organizations such as: Maternal Newborn Nurse Professionals of Southeastern Michigan
 - Fatherhood organizations
 - Other suggestions?



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

What You Can Do to Help

- Hospitals and Clinics:
 - Talk with your delivering physicians about paternity education for your hospital
 - Make paternity establishment brochures and posters available in all units where expectant parents visit (they are all free!)
 - Include the Unmarried Parent Checklist in prenatal folders and hospital admittance packets



What You Can Do to Help

- Other Agencies:
 - Talk with your colleagues about helping expectant parents learn about paternity establishment
 - Share paternity establishment information with related agencies and professional organizations
 - Make paternity establishment brochures available in all units where expectant parents visit (they are free!)
 - Share the *Unmarried Parent Checklist*
 - Contact the Paternity Establishment Liaison for assistance (Ellen Wood 517-373-0275)

Unmarried Parent Checklist

Unmarried, Expecting Parent Checklist



Congratulations on the
Upcoming Birth of Your Baby!



Take the First Step for Your Child – Establish Paternity

Benefits of Paternity Establishment

Identity: It is important for children to know who they are. Children deserve a chance to have a relationship with both sides of their family and to feel like they belong.

Money: It's best when parents share the cost of taking care of their child. Plus, the law says both parents must support their children.

Benefits: Your child has a right to benefits from both parents, such as social security or veterans' benefits.

Medical: Your child may be able to get health insurance from one or both parents, and may benefit from knowing medical history of both parents.

What you need to know

- Paternity = **Legal Fatherhood.**
- Before the dad's name can go on the birth certificate at the hospital, unmarried couples must:**
 - Complete a voluntary *Affidavit of Parentage (AOP)*;
 - Understand that by signing the AOP, the child's paternity is legally established; and
 - Know that it is free to complete the AOP at the time of birth. If you complete the AOP later, there is a fee to add the father's name to the birth certificate.
- If the mom is **married** to a man who is **not** the biological father of the child, the law says the husband is the legal father. **A different man cannot use the AOP.**
- The Michigan Office of Child Support can help with genetic testing and a court order to establish paternity and child support.

What you need to do

- Read the entire *Affidavit of Parentage (AOP)*, including the section about **your rights and responsibilities.**
- Read the two brochures:
 - *What Every Parent Should Know About Establishing Paternity*
 - *Fatherhood – Taking Responsibility for Your Child*
- Ask questions if you do not understand.
- Be ready to sign the AOP at the hospital when your child is born.
- Both parents need to **bring a valid photo ID to the hospital.**
- For more information about paternity establishment or child support, call 1-866-540-0008; or go to the website www.michigan.gov/childsupport.



Win-Win!

- Both parents and their child benefit when parents receive paternity establishment education earlier in the birth process
- We all benefit when we help make lives better for Michigan families and give them the **DAD**vantage!



YOUR PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Could you explain the Michigan Law that requires a married woman to name her husband as the father of the baby



- When a married or recently divorced woman gives birth to a child whose biological father is not her husband, the biological father will not be considered the legal father
- Even though the husband or ex-husband is not the child's biological parent, he is the child's legal parent under Michigan law. The husband is the legal parent of every child born or conceived during the marriage
- Only a judge can declare a husband not to be the legal father.

How to counsel family when they plan to sign paternity papers knowing that he is not the biological father of baby



Attempting to counsel families “when they plan to sign paternity papers knowing that he is not the biological father of baby is a very serious situation.

CAUTION! There are two very important points here

1. The Affidavit of Parentage (AOP) is intended ONLY for the biological parents of the child. That is stated on the document. Even if the mother prefers another man (not the biological father) to be the child’s legal father, it is against the law (fraud) and can have detrimental consequences for everyone involved but especially the child. A man who is not the biological parent should never sign the AOP.
2. It’s important that we do not provide any kind of legal advice or council. What should provide information and education about paternity without urging them to make any particular decision It’s also important to provide information when they are still expecting so they are prepared to make the fatherhood decision at the time of birth.

If unmarried parents are living together will a formal child support order still be established? How do they determine if fathers are asked to pay birth expenses and how much they are asked to pay? Is there a way to speed the process up? Can women mail in information about the father before the baby is born so they can get the ball rolling



- There are many individual circumstances that play a part in whether a family is involved in Child Support or not, so the answers to these questions will vary greatly, depending of the situation
- There is no escalated path to case processing but communicating and cooperating with case workers will definitely help
- If a parent or expectant parent would like help submitting information for a child support case and/or paternity case, they can call the Office of Child Support number: 866-540-0008

What is the timeline for what our client's need to do to establish paternity.



Unmarried parents can establish paternity at the time of birth or at any other time after the birth. Most commonly, paternity is established at the hospital, right after the child is born and before the mother is discharged.

RESOURCES

Resources

- Hospital web-page (see handout)
- Teen curriculum: The Responsibilities of Parenting – R U Ready?
- Paternity Establishment Liaison
 - Ellen Wood
 - MDHHS-OCS-PEP@michigan.gov
 - 517-373-0275
- References
 - Child and Family Research
 - Centers for Disease Control
 - National Institutes of Health
 - US Dept. of Agriculture
 - facethefacts.org
 - childtrends.org
 - Brookings.edu
 - US Dept. of Agriculture

Thank you for your help!
Contact me any time
for more information

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