

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.

