

Establishing Parentage with Child Support Services



The Kansas Department for Children and Families understands you have options for assistance with your child support needs, but did you know we do much more than enforce child support? We also provide services including establishing parentage.

What is Parentage?

- Parentage is the legal status of being a parent.
- If the parents are not legally married at the time of birth, the law does not recognize the second parent therefore no rights or responsibilities to the child.
- Establishing parentage is the process for determining the legal parents of a child.

Why is Parentage Important for Children?

- Legal record of the identity of both parents.
- Information about family medical history.
- Emotional benefits of knowing both parents.
- Financial support from both parents, including child support, social security, veteran's benefits, military allowances, and inheritance.
- Health or life insurance from either parent, if available.
- Improved financial security for the child.
- Access to medical insurance, if available.
- Right to be informed and have a say in adoption proceedings.

Acknowledgment of Parentage

Unmarried parents have the option of signing a form called Acknowledgment of Parentage. This is a no cost, simple and convenient method, but not everyone is eligible to use it. Be sure to read the Parentage Consent Form for Birth Registration carefully because it creates a parent/child relationship.

The following are examples when couples should not sign the Acknowledgment of Parentage form for Birth Registration:

- If the parent was legally married to anyone within 300 days from the date the baby was born.
- If the parent is separated and not legally divorced.
- If the parent is not sure that they conceived the child.

If you have questions, ask your medical provider/child support worker or Vital Statistics (Kansas Department of Health and Environment).

Filing a Parentage Action

If you choose or need to establish parentage, you may apply for services with your local DCF. Genetic testing is one way in which parentage can be established.

Genetic testing can be offered prior to filing an official court action and is offered at no cost through Child Support Services. If the test shows the alleged parent is the biological parent, then a petition to determine parentage is filed with the court so an official order declaring the parentage can be entered.

If voluntary testing isn't a possibility, a petition is filed with the court and an order for genetic testing to determine the parent of the child is requested. The genetic testing will still be free of charge.

The genetic testing involves the mother, child, and alleged father going to a designated site where a lab technician will swab the inside of their cheek with a cotton swab, and then send to the contracted laboratory for processing. Genetic testing is the most accurate way to determine the parent of a child.

If you have questions about parentage or child support, please go to our website, www.dcf.ks.gov or call 888-757-2445.