

ESTABLISHING PATERNITY



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Michigan Supreme Court
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What is Paternity Establishment?

- Paternity establishment is when the law treats a man as the child's father.

How is paternity established?

- Both parents can sign an Affidavit of Parentage.
- The mother or the prosecuting attorney can ask the court to establish paternity. This might involve court hearings and DNA testing.
- Paternity can also be determined by genetic testing.

How do I ask the court to establish paternity?

- If the mother lives in Michigan, she can file a paternity case in the county where she lives.
- If the mother and child do not live in Michigan, the mother can file the case in the county where the possible father lives.

What if the father denies paternity?

- The mother or the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) can ask the court to establish paternity. The possible father may ask for a court hearing to prove whether he is the father.

What if I do not know who the father is?

- You may contact a MDHHS child support specialist at 1-866-540-0008. The specialist will help you identify and locate the possible father.
- If you receive public assistance and refuse to give information about a possible father, your public assistance benefits may be lowered or stopped.

Can parents who are not married voluntarily establish paternity?

- Yes, both parents can sign an Acknowledgement of Parentage to establish paternity.
- If you are unsure who the father is, you can ask for a DNA test of the child before signing the Acknowledgement of Parentage.

What if the mother becomes pregnant or has the baby while she is married?

- The person the mother was married to when she became pregnant or had the baby is the legal father. This can be changed by the court.

When can the name of the father be put on the child's birth certificate?

- If the mother and father are married, the father's name is put on the birth certificate when the child is born.
- If the mother and father are not married, the parties must sign an Acknowledgement of Parentage to have the father's name put on the birth certificate.

Can paternity be established if the father lives outside of Michigan?

- Yes, either by the Michigan courts or with the help of a MDHHS child support specialist.