Parentage Establishment

California's Child Support Program: A Resource for Parents

Parentage establishment is the process of determining a child's legal parents. The benefits of establishing parentage are numerous for all parties, but most of all for your child. Establishing parentage is necessary before custody, visitation and child support issues can be addressed by the court. Research shows that parents who pay child support are more likely to be engaged in a child's life.

- **Who needs to establish parentage?**

  If the parents are not married at the time of conception, needs to be established. By law, parentage is presumed when both parents were married at the time the child was conceived. If the marriage occurs after the child is conceived, parentage still must be established legally.

- **How can I establish parentage?**

  - **By Voluntary Declaration**

    The Declaration of Parentage (CS 909) is a legal form that, when signed by both parties and sent to the state, establishes the parents of the named child without having to go to court. The form can be obtained at the hospital right after your child is born and may also be obtained through the child support office, or at the court via the Family Law Facilitator. For more information, call the Parentage Opportunity Program (POP) at:1-866-249-0773.

  - **By Court Order**

    Either parent of a child can request assistance from the local child support agency to pursue legal action to establish parentage. In many instances the local child support agency can facilitate genetic testing as part of the process to establish a court order of parentage.

Why is Establishing Parentage Important?

Parentage provides a child of unmarried parents the same legal rights as a child born to married parents.

Once parentage is legally established, children are entitled to the following:

- Financial support
- Access to Family Medical History
- Inheritance Rights

And if available:

- Medical and life insurance benefits
- Social security benefits

For more information, contact your local child support office: 1 (866) 901-3212 **or TTY:** 1 (866) 399-4096
https://childsupport.ca.gov/

Child Support Directors Association
A Coalition of Experts Collecting Billions for California's Children

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