



### **What If Parents Acknowledge Paternity but Change Their Minds Later?**

Parents should think carefully before acknowledging paternity. If you do change your mind, you have 60 days to rescind (cancel) the paternity acknowledgment. A court order is required to remove the name of the father from the birth certificate.

### **What Are Your Responsibilities as a Parent?**

Both parents are required to support their child from birth. This might include providing child support, health insurance, and/or childcare expenses.

### **Benefits of Paternity Acknowledgment**

#### ***Paternity helps children:***

- Receive financial support from both parents
- Include the father's name on the birth certificate
- Qualify for benefits, such as the father's health insurance or Social Security

#### ***Paternity helps mothers and fathers:***

- Share the responsibility and rewards of parenthood
- Include their name on the child's birth certificate
- Establish an emotional bond with the child

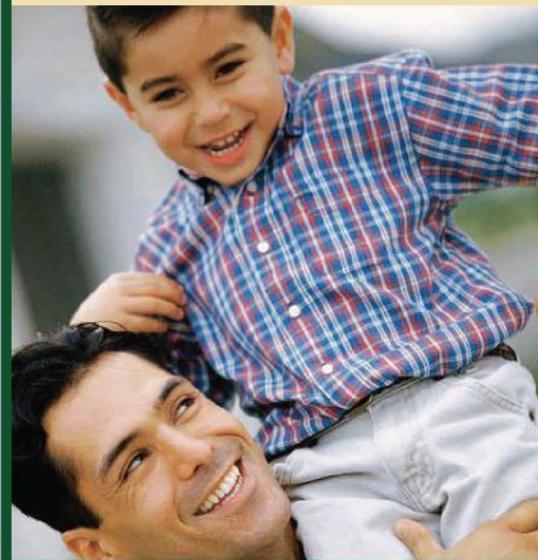
**For more information about  
paternity, call:**

### **Georgia Paternity Acknowledgment Program**

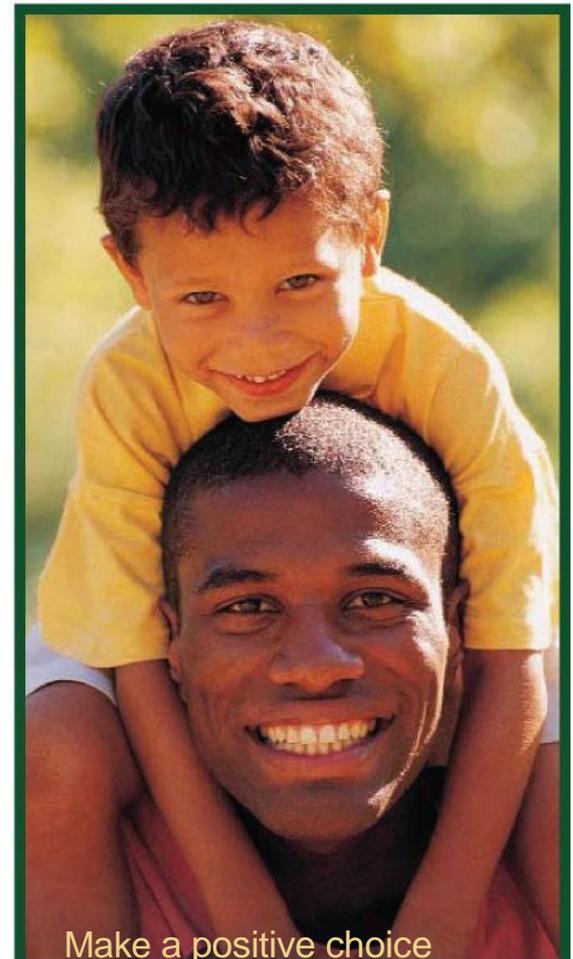
**Toll Free:  
1-844-MYGADHS  
(1-844-694-2347)**

**For more information  
about birth certificates, call:**

**State Office of Vital Records  
404-679-4702**



Form DCSS 400



**Make a positive choice  
for your child**

### **Georgia Paternity Acknowledgment Program**

Georgia Department of Human Services



**For Unmarried Parents**



## What Is Paternity Acknowledgment and Why Should I Complete a Paternity Form?

Paternity acknowledgment allows unmarried parents to add the biological father's name to their child's birth certificate. To take advantage of this opportunity, you must complete a paternity acknowledgment form. Once you do, your child will receive the following benefits that come from having two parents:

- The use of his or her father's last name
- Knowledge of both parents' medical histories
- The opportunity to have a relationship with both parents
- Legal support from dad's side of family

In addition, your child may be eligible for Social Security benefits and may gain inheritance rights.

## What Is Legitimation and Why Is It Necessary?

Legitimation is an action that allows the biological father of a child born in Georgia to establish legal rights to his child. It is the only way, aside from marrying the child's mother, to gain these rights.

Effective July 2005, parents who sign a voluntary paternity acknowledgment may also sign a voluntary acknowledgment of legitimation. Effective July 2008, this opportunity is limited to the child's first year of life.

Completing the legitimation section on the paternity acknowledgment form means that the father and child will be capable of inheriting from each other in the same manner as if the child had been born in lawful wedlock. It also allows parents to specify the child's last name, and grants the child's father the right to petition the court for custody and/or visitation.

## What Rights Will I Have?

Legitimizing your child does not automatically give you visitation or custody rights—just the opportunity to petition the court for them. Only a superior court order can formalize visitation or custody.

## What If Parents Are Not Sure Who the Father Is?

Genetic (paternity) testing can help you determine whether a man is a child's biological father. By calling GPAP, you can receive referrals for DNA testing at reduced prices. A child support office or private attorney can also give you more information.

## Is Paternity Acknowledgment Easy?

Yes! The paternity acknowledgment process is easy and available to parents if the mother was not married at the time of birth, the time of conception, or at any time in between. Parents simply complete a paternity acknowledgment form. Paternity

acknowledgment will be explained to you in more detail when you complete your child's birth certificate in the hospital. Both parents can acknowledge paternity at the hospital when their child is born. This gives their child the advantage of having a father right from the start! Parents can also fill out a paternity acknowledgment form after the child's birth at the vital records office in the county where the child was born, or at the State Office of Vital Records in Atlanta.

## What Are the Requirements to Acknowledge Paternity?

In order for you to acknowledge paternity the following must occur:

- The mother must have given birth in the State of Georgia.
- The father must be the child's biological father.
- Both parents must sign the same paternity acknowledgment form.

## What Do I Need to Acknowledge Paternity?

You must provide the following in order to establish paternity:

- A photo ID (driver's license, work or school ID) from both parents;
- Social Security numbers from both parents if they have one.