

Eligibility

To participate in the Access and Visitation Program, the parent must have an open child support case through the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS). The case will be reviewed once the parent requests these services to determine eligibility.

Basic visitation rights

When married parents divorce, the parents have equal rights to custody and visitation with their children until a court makes an order about custody or visitation.

If the parents are not married to each other and the father has not legitimated the child, only the mother has custody and control of the child. This means the father does not have the right to have visitation with the child without the mother's permission.

By the numbers

In Federal Fiscal Year 2024:



2,560

parents attended individual counseling



282

parents attended group parenting sessions



1,054

parents were referred to the Access & Visitation Program



1,401

children benefited from services provided to their parents

Contact us

Please contact us for information about the Access & Visitation Program at **dcssaccessvisitation@dhs.ga.gov** or by calling 1-877-423-4746. For more information, visit our website at **childsupport.georgia.gov**.

Online referral

To complete the online referral, scan the QR code.



Legal services are not included in this program.

These services are offered through contracts with the Georgia Department of Human Services. All services are free of charge. Funding is provided through grants by the Administration for Children and Families.



**Georgia Department
of Human Services**
Division of Child Support Services



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Access & Visitation Program





How does a father legitimate his child?

If the mother consents, an unwed father may sign to establish paternity of his child on the paternity affidavit from the hospital or the Health Department within one year of the child's birth. This process may assist the father in legitimating his child through the court process if the parents were never married to each other.

Legitimation is the legal process that fathers use (other than previous marriage to the mother) to establish parental rights to their children who were born out of wedlock. Without legitimation, such fathers have no right to custody or visitation of those children (although the laws say they have the obligation to support them financially).

Our services

Case intake and assessment

An orientation session dedicated to obtaining case-specific information about the child support case from parents – noncustodial or custodial – to initiate program services.

Individual counseling/education session

An individual session between a case worker and the program participant. This session is dedicated to address potential plans of action to establish safe access to and visitation with their children.

Group parenting education

Group instruction for one or both parents to provide information about legal services, co-parenting strategies, education about the developmental age of children, and healthy coping skills alongside personal accountability and responsibility.

Mediations

The purpose of this session is to create a parenting plan between the custodial and noncustodial parent in order to establish a schedule for visits and/or exchanges of the children from one parent to another.

Supervised visitation

A visitation session observed by a trained professional or social worker.

Monitored visitation

A social worker or trained professional sets up the visitation session and follows up afterward with each parent.

Neutral drop-off and pick-up visitation

A mutual safe site is provided for visitation exchanges, assuring no direct contact between the parents.

What does "legitimate" mean?

- **Legitimate:**
If the child was born when the parents were married or was conceived during the parents' marriage and they separated or divorced before the child was born, that child is still considered legitimate. If the parents marry after a child is born, that child is considered legitimate.
- **Illegitimate:**
If the parents were not married when the child was conceived, not married when the child was born, and have not been married since the child was born, that child is considered illegitimate.

For more information on legitimation, visit georgialegalaid.org.