

SEO/Meta Page Title:

Will I need to have a paternity test to collect child support?

Meta Description:

A paternity test raises sensitive issues. Handled incorrectly, it could result in lost child support.

Article Heading:

Is a paternity test mandatory for child support in Texas?

Keyword-Rich Content (Body):

Under Texas law, a child born to unwed parents has a biological father, but the paternal legal support of the child is not enforced outside of marriage without a completed Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) form.

Without this form, the biological father owes the child nothing.

When I should I get an AOP?

You should get an AOP as soon as possible.

An ideal time to get an AOP is at the hospital when the baby is born. Texas hospitals keep AOP forms on file. **Filling out the AOP at the birth means:**

- **the hospital will send in the AOP to the Bureau of Vital Statistics;** and
- **the hospital adds the father's name to the birth certificate without cost.**

Once the AOP is completed, the father's name is put on the birth certificate.

Another good reason to fill out an AOP at the hospital is because it establishes a legal connection to the child from an early stage, ensuring financial benefits for the child without much delay.

What if my baby hasn't been born yet, but I know the father can't be at the birth?

If you know that the father will not be at the birth, you can arrange to fill out the AOP early by calling the Attorney General's office and requesting a form be sent to you. Then you bring the signed form to the hospital with you.

If the child is already born and you didn't file an AOP at the hospital, you can get the form at the Attorney General's Child Support Office, the Bureau of Vital Statistics, or your local birth registrar. Each of these places will be able to provide you with instructions on how to proceed.

Should I worry about an AOP even if the father and I get along?

Even if you and the father are still a couple and plan to be together forever, filling out an AOP form proves necessary to the welfare of the child because the future is unpredictable.

As harsh as it sounds, one can never assume the outcome of a relationship, or even how long one will live. Part of the responsibility of being a parent is putting the child first by anticipating the possibility of these unpleasant events then planning for them in the best way possible.

What if I am married to someone else at the time of birth?

If you are married to someone else at the time of birth, then your husband must file a Denial of Paternity form before the AOP is valid. This denial must also be signed if you give birth within three hundred days of a divorce to another man.

The denial is part of the AOP form.

Do I need to contact a lawyer?

If everyone involved in your situation is in agreement, chances are you won't need a lawyer.

However, if the paternity is being challenged or the father wants to rescind his AOP claim, then you may need to contact the Dallas law office of (insert contact info here.)

References used and cited:

https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/AG_Publications/txts/paternity.shtml