

Child Support. What Teen Mothers Need to Know.

**If you are the person taking care
of your child, you have the right to get
child support from your child's father.**



What is paternity?

Paternity means legally identifying the father of your child. It can be done at the hospital when your baby is born, or by signing legal papers later on. Paternity can also be determined through DNA tests or through a court order. It is easiest to do when your baby is born.

The legal father of your child must be established before you can collect child support.

What happens if I establish paternity?

If you establish paternity:

- Your child will know who his/her father is;
- Your child may be able to inherit money from his/her father and collect money from Social Security if his/her father dies or becomes unable to work; and
- The father of your child may ask a court for visits and custody of your child.

Think about this decision carefully.

Talk to us if you have questions.

How do I get child support?

You can get child support through a legal agreement between you and the father; or, you can go to court to get a court order.



How do I start the court process to collect child support?

If you apply for state assistance (cash assistance or medical assistance), the State will start the process even if you don't want them to. In most cases, you will have to provide information about your child's father when you apply for state assistance. If you are afraid your baby's father will hurt you, or you don't know who your baby's father is, you might not have to provide information about him in order to get cash assistance or medical assistance. Call us if you need help with this.

If you are not getting state assistance, you can get help to start the child support process by calling Child Support Enforcement. The phone number is on the back of this brochure.

If I am getting cash assistance from the State, will child support affect how much I get?

Yes. Your cash assistance will be reduced every month for each dollar of child support you get over \$50 (this may change to \$100 in 2009). If you get \$50 or less in child support, your cash assistance will not be reduced.

Why should I try to get child support if my child's father doesn't have any money?

If you get a court order for child support now, this will help you if the father does have money later on. He might get a better paying job, inherit some money, or win a lawsuit or the lottery.

What will happen if my child's father is older than me?

If you were younger than 16 and your child's father was more than three years older than you when you became pregnant, the father could be arrested for sexual assault. When you apply for state assistance, the State could refer your child's father to the prosecutor's office and they could decide to press charges.

Your child
has the right

to be
supported
by both
parents.

Where can I get help?

If you need help getting child support:

Call Child Support Enforcement at 1-800-228-KIDS.

For more information about child support and your legal rights

Call CCA's Teen Legal Clinic at
860-570-5327 or 203-223-8975.



Center for *Children's* Advocacy

University of Connecticut School of Law
65 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, CT 06105
www.kidscounsel.org

How can I get
child
support?