Commonly Asked Questions

Paternity Establishment

When is paternity establishment necessary?

Paternity should be established for all children whose parents were not married to each other when the child was born.

What are the benefits of paternity establishment?

Establishing paternity carries numerous advantages for both the family and the child(ren): financial assistance from child support collections; access to medical insurance benefits and other legal entitlements such as Social Security benefits, disability benefits, inheritance, pension and veterans' benefits; a sense of family heritage; and the possibility of strengthening the social and psychological bonds between a father and his child. It is also in the child's best medical interest to know who his or her parents are since certain diseases, illnesses and birth defects are known to be passed on to children from their parents.

How do I request paternity establishment through administrative process?

If you are receiving Ohio Works First (OWF) benefits, the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services will automatically refer your case to the CSEA for appropriate action. If you are not receiving OWF benefits and are interested in signing up for child support services, please call us at 525-3275.

Franklin County
Board of Commissioners
CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT
1803

Kevin L. Boyce
Marilyn Brown
John O'Grady

The Franklin County Board of Commissioners serves as the administrative head of Franklin County government and directly supervises the operation of 14 county agencies. These agencies are:

- Animal Care & Control
- Benefits & Risk Management
- Child Support Enforcement
- Economic Development & Planning
- Fleet Management
- Homeland Security & Justice Programs
- Human Resources
- Job & Family Services
- Office of Mangement & Budget
- Office on Aging
- Public Affairs
- Public Facilties Management
- Purchasing Department
- Sanitary Engineering

Franklin County Board of Commissioners
373 S. High Street, 26th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 525-3322

www.FranklinCountyOhio.gov

CSEA-PAM-14 (Rev. 5-2019)

Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency

Paternity Establishment

Through Administrative Process

CSEA

Franklin County

Child **S**upport
Enforcement **A**gency

Franklin County
Board of Commissioners
CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT
1803

How will I be notified when the agency is ready to proceed with paternity establishment on my case?

After you have completed your intake interview, been enrolled for Title IV-D services, and the agency has located the alleged father of the child, we'll be getting in touch with you by mail. This letter will contain an order for genetic testing and notification of the date, time and place of your scheduled administrative paternity conference. Please plan to arrive on time for this appointment and be sure to bring your picture identification and the child along with you.

What happens once I arrive at the CSEA on the day of my paternity conference?

The conference participants (that's you, your child and the alleged father) will be seated in a reception area until called. While you are waiting, both you and the alleged father will be asked to fill out some necessary paperwork.

How will paternity be determined?

During the course of your agency visit, there are two ways for the paternity issue to be resolved. The first and preferred method is through genetic testing. A licensed phlebotomist will be on site to administer these genetic tests.

How is genetic testing done?

The genetic testing process is simple and painless. Sponge-like swabs are rolled across the cheek area on the inside of the mouth to collect buccal cell samples.

These samples (mother's/child's/ alleged father's) are then sent out to a lab where the DNA material is analyzed. If the genetic tests show a 99% or greater probability that the male is the biological father of the child, then our hearing officer will issue an order establishing paternity.

Who pays for these genetic tests?

The genetic testing which is ordered as part of our administrative paternity process will be made available to you at no cost. The State of Ohio will pay for these tests.

How long must I wait before being notified of the genetic testing results?

Genetic test results are usually available within three to four weeks.

What happens if one of the parties fails to appear for the paternity establishment conference?

When one of the parties fails to appear, the administrative paternity case will be dismissed. Once this happens, the only way for paternity to be established is through court action, which the CSEA may initiate on your behalf.

What is the second method that can be used for paternity establishment on the day of my scheduled conference at the agency?

Utilizing administrative process, paternity can also be established through completion of an Acknowledgment of Paternity Affidavit, or APA. This method of paternity establishment is not available on cases where the mother is married at the time of the birth of the child.

How does the APA process work?

After both parties have completed the APA, each of you will have 60 days to reconsider your decision. During this 60-day period, either party may decide to rescind their acknowledgment and go on to request genetic testing. If neither party chooses to rescind their APA submission, then on the 61st day after signing the instrument the paternity action will become final.

What about getting the father's name on the child's birth certificate?

Following a positive outcome on genetic testing or a decision to go with the APA process, the father's name will be included on a new birth certificate reissued by the Bureau of Vital Statistics. The Bureau may also execute a change in the child's last name, but only if both the mother and the father agree to the proposed change.

Of the two methods available to me for paternity establishment through administrative process, which one does the agency recommend?

We recommend going the genetic testing route. Genetic testing has been universally regarded as providing an "objective" and "definitive" determination of a paternity issue. Paternities established through this process are not subject to a successful challenge at some later time in court. Paternities established through APA filings, however, are subject to a challenge in court at a later date should either party experience a change of heart on this issue.

Visit us on the Web at:
https://support.franklincountyohio.gov