

Will I have to pay child support, if I sign this form?

Signing the VAoP form does not mean that you will automatically be made to pay support.

What if I am not available to sign because I'm in jail or in the military?

You can contact your local health department or child support office to make an appointment to complete the VAoP form. They have a process in place to assist you.

Is there a fee to have the birth certificate changed?

In order to have the birth certificate changed, the parents will be responsible for paying the associated Vital Records fees. Please visit the Department of Health's Vital Records website for fee amounts:

<http://www.tn.gov/health/article/vr-fees>

What do I need in order to change the child's name on their Social Security card?

The parents must provide the Social Security Office with a certified copy of the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity and/or a court order and the long form birth certificate.

The mother and I are minors. Can we sign the VAoP?

Yes. In Tennessee, minors can sign the VAoP to acknowledge paternity if your parent or guardian is willing to sign consent and be present when you sign the form.

For more information:

- Visit our website at:
<http://tn.gov/humanservices/topic/child-support-services>
- Contact or visit your local Child Support Office. You can find your nearest Child Support Office at:
<http://tn.gov/humanservices/article/child-support-office-locator>
- Questions regarding Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity (VAoP)?

Contact Tennessee VAoP Hotline at:
1-800-457-2165

Child Support Services does not represent either the custodial or non-custodial parent, but represents the State of Tennessee and the best interest of the child.

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You may also write Tennessee, DHS, Civil Rights Compliance Officer, Citizens Plaza Building, 400 Deaderick Street, 15th Floor, Nashville, TN 37243, (615) 313-4748.

support



Paternity Guide for Dads

What Fathers Need to Know about
Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity



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What is a VAoP?

Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity (VAoP) is Tennessee's official process for parents to legally establish paternity without going to court. For more information, you can also view the VAoP video at:

<http://tn.gov/humanservices/article/child-support-establishing-paternity>

Married Dads

If you are married to the child's mother when:

- The child is born; or
- The child is conceived; or
- Any time during the three-hundred (300) days before the birth of the child....

Tennessee law states that the husband is presumed the legal father of the child and his name **must** go on the child's birth certificate.

Options for Married Dads

If your name is placed on the child's birth certificate and you are not the biological father of the child, there are ways to have your name removed from the birth certificate and the biological father's name added. You should contact a private attorney to pursue the matter through court.

What if I'm not sure I'm the father?

If either of you are unsure, you should not sign the VAoP form. You may wish to contact your local child support agency and request DNA testing.

Divorced Dads

If you finalized your divorce with the mother during the last three-hundred (300) days before the child's birth, you are presumed to be the legal father. Your name **must** go on the child's birth certificate. Unless you have a divorce decree that specifically states that you are not the biological father of the child in question. The DNA test results must be attached to the decree. If your divorce decree has this information, you will need to provide the hospital birth clerk a certified copy of the final divorce decree.

What if the child's mother refuses to give the birth clerk my name?

If the child's mother refuses to put your name on your child's birth certificate, the hospital is required to enter '*Mother Refused Information*' in the father's name section of the birth certificate. You will not be able to be added as the biological father of your child on the birth certificate until you have a certified copy of a final court order.



Why should I sign the VAoP?

Acknowledging paternity does a lot more than allow for child support. For example:

- It allows the child to know his/her father.
- It allows you to add the child to your health and life insurance benefits.
- It gives the child rights to military, veterans and/or Social Security benefits.
- It gives the child access to both parent's medical history.
- It gives the child rights to inheritance.
- It gives you legal rights to custody or visitation and to be involved in the child's life.

I know I'm not the biological father, but I really want to be a father to this child.

It is wonderful that you want to be involved in the child's life. However, this is a legal document in which you are swearing to the fact that you are the biological and legal father of the child. If the biological father is unable or unwilling to provide for his child, there are other options such as adoption of the child.

If I sign the 'Mother's Worksheet' at the hospital, will my name appear on the child's birth certificate?

The 'Mother's Worksheet' is just that – a worksheet that the hospital birth certificate clerk uses to enter information into the vital records system. That creates the actual birth certificate and/or VAoP. You will still need to complete the VAoP to legally establish paternity.