Voluntary Paternity Affidavit

Explaining the importance of establishing paternity, including describing the process of completing a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit

Facilitator Guide
Voluntary Paternity Affidavit

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Acknowledgements

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www.childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program

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Getting Started

About This Guide

What’s the purpose of this guide?

Do you struggle to understand how to communicate the importance of paternity establishment and paternity affidavits to future and current parents? This guide is designed to allow you to choose specific activities to educate the audience with whom you are working.

For example, if you are working with future parents who have misconceptions about paternity establishment, particularly related to adding the father to the birth certificate or receiving child support, it may be beneficial to use the “Paternity Establishment Quiz.”

This curriculum was developed to meet a variety of needs in different types of learning environments, while recognizing time constraints, different audiences that you may serve, etc. The curriculum was designed to allow you to meet different needs by picking and choosing different activities and information for each audience and/or situation.

This facilitator guide provides a master reference document to help you educate parents and staff about Voluntary Paternity Affidavits.

If you need a refresher on a past training at your organization, you can also reference Module 2 (Educating Employees About Paternity Affidavits) to help you remember what was discussed.
About This Guide

What will I find in this guide?

This facilitator guide is a comprehensive package that contains the following:

- Paternity Establishment Quiz: Addressing Myths about Paternity
- Double Checking for These Common Errors: Voluntary Paternity Affidavits
- Paternity Establishment: Addressing the How and Why
- Sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit: Example for Completion
- Paternity Affidavits: What Do I Need to Bring?
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Unmarried Parents Brochure
- *Power of Two* Video
- Past employee training information about paternity affidavits

In addition to the above activities and information, this curriculum also includes the following:

- Contacts to answer questions
- Key points to cover
- Purpose and value of sharing the information with future and current parents at educational opportunities, including during birthing classes, in the hospital room, during parenting classes, etc.
- Estimated time commitment for each activity
- Suggested process for implementing each activity
About This Guide

How is this guide organized?

The “Getting Started” section contains all of the background information for the “Voluntary Paternity Affidavit” educational material.

“Information for Future and Current Parents” (Module 1) is a module that addresses individual lessons, each of which includes one activity to use with future or current parents.

Each lesson is a self-contained activity that can be tailored to the audience with whom you are working. Each lesson begins with a one-page summary that addresses important information, including key points, contacts, and more. Use these summary pages to get an overview of the activity that follows.

“Educating Employees About Paternity Affidavits” (Module 2) is a module that refreshes employees (hospital, community organization, etc.) about what was discussed at the Paternity Affidavit training for employees.

How is the text laid out in this guide?

Every action in the program is described by a text box (similar to this one) with a marginal icon, a title line, and important information to note. The icons are designed to catch your eye and draw quick attention to “what to do and how to do it.”

For example, the icon to the left indicates that you, the instructor/facilitator, should pay attention to communicating key points to your audience.

The title line gives a brief description of what the icon on the left means and is followed by information that may be helpful in facilitating the lesson.
The Program in Perspective

Why the “Voluntary Paternity Affidavit” curriculum?

Every birthing hospital in the state of Iowa is required to provide information to unmarried parents about how to establish paternity. However, there is a lot of information to communicate to parents in a short amount of time, and because new parents are so excited about the journey on which they are about to embark, they may be distracted.

Based on this, a curriculum has been developed to help hospital employees present this important information to future and current parents. While developing the curriculum, the designers understood that each audience may have different needs.

Thus, the curriculum has been designed to allow for unique audiences to have their needs met—each activity is independent of the others and can be used to meet the unique needs of each audience.

Employees can also refresh themselves on past paternity affidavit trainings to better educate themselves on how to teach unmarried parents about this important information.
The Program in Perspective

Learning Objectives:
Using this curriculum will allow for future and current parents to do the following:

- Address misconceptions and myths about paternity establishment ("Paternity Establishment Quiz: Addressing Myths About Paternity")
- Submit Voluntary Paternity Affidavits that are free of the most common errors ("Double Checking for These Common Errors: Voluntary Paternity Affidavits")
- Understand paternity establishment, specifically the importance of establishing it and how to do so ("Paternity Establishment: Addressing the How and Why")
- Examine a sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit to understand how to complete one with ease ("Sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit: Example for Completion")
- Understand what IDs should be brought to complete and submit a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit, including where Voluntary Paternity Affidavits can be collected ("Paternity Affidavits: What Do I Need to Bring?")
- Address common questions related to Voluntary Paternity Affidavits and paternity establishment that future and current parents may have ("Frequently Asked Questions")
- Inform unmarried parents about the importance of establishing paternity ("Unmarried Parents Brochure, Power of Two Video")

Employees will also be able to refresh themselves on the information learned at past paternity affidavit trainings.
Paternity Establishment Quiz

Overview:
The “Paternity Establishment Quiz” addresses common misconceptions and myths that future and current parents have about paternity establishment, including birth certificates, legal fathers, benefits of establishing paternity, and unmarried parents.

Learning Objective:
After working through the questions in the quiz, future and current parents will have a better understanding of the importance of paternity establishment and how it impacts children and adults.

Key Points:
- Solely adding the father’s name to the birth certificate does not create a legal father. Paternity can be established through marriage (at conception, at birth, or anytime between), court order, or Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.
- If a baby’s parents are not married at the time of conception, at the birth, or anytime between, paternity must be established through court order or Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.
- Establishing paternity (through marriage, court order, Voluntary Paternity Affidavit) might lead to medical insurance, child support, or inheritance.
- Paternity must be established in order for a child to receive legal benefits through the father.

Contacts:
Contact your local Child Support Recovery Unit office for more information and answers: https://goo.gl/TLHYG1 (case sensitive).
Paternity Establishment Quiz

Purpose and Value of Information:
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
- Paternity establishment may lead to child support payments and visitation.
- Children with paternity established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources.
- Fathers who establish paternity through Voluntary Paternity Affidavits may be more likely to provide informal support.

Time Commitment: It will take less than 5 minutes to take the quiz.

Suggested Process:
- Ask the mom and dad to read the questions (slides 1, 3, 5, and 7) out loud and answer the questions. Once they have decided on an answer, help them to understand what the correct answers are and what this means for their child.
- Have questions printed on notecards or paper or projected onto a screen/TV/wall to help everyone read the question.

Materials
“Paternity Establishment Quiz”
Available for download at http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/
Double Checking for These Common Errors

Overview:
If any mistakes are made on the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit, the Bureau of Health Statistics sends the form back to the baby’s mom. Typically, most Voluntary Paternity Affidavits are completed in the hospital; however, reading and responding to the mail is likely to be low on a new parent’s priority list after returning from the hospital.

By making sure that all mistakes are taken care of while the mother is in the hospital ensures that the most children as possible have paternity established.

Learning Objective:
Future and current parents will understand the most common errors made on Voluntary Paternity Affidavits and will double check to make sure that their Voluntary Paternity Affidavit is not rejected for one of these common mistakes, thereby reducing the number of rejections processed by the Bureau of Health Statistics.

Key Points:
- Each Voluntary Paternity Affidavit needs to be checked for accuracy and completion by both hospital staff and parents to ensure that the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit is not rejected.
- Double checking Voluntary Paternity Affidavits allows for a greater number of children to have paternity established.

Contacts:
Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information and answers: pataff@iastate.edu.

Purpose and Value of Information:
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
- Paternity establishment may lead to child support payments and visitation.
- Children with paternity established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources.
Double Checking for These Common Errors

**Time Commitment:** It will take less than 5 minutes to double check the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit for accuracy, errors, and completion.

**Suggested Process:**
- Work through the checklist together (mom, dad, notary, hospital staff, etc.) to ensure that the most common errors are not found on the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit. The more eyes that look at the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit, the more potential errors will be found.
- Have a checklist printed for each Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.

**Materials**
“**Double Checking for These Common Errors**”

Available for download at [http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/](http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/)
Paternity Establishment: Addressing the How and Why

Overview:
Future and current parents are often overwhelmed by the information presented to them about parenting, including suggested diet, parenting tactics, and more, which may come to them through conversations, news articles, scientific studies, and more.

When the information related to paternity establishment is presented in an easy-to-follow way, future and current parents may process the information more easily and understand how valuable it is and how it relates to their child.

Learning Objective:
Future and current parents will understand why establishing paternity for their child is important and how they can establish paternity.

Key Points:
- There are many important reasons to establish paternity for children, including legal, mental, and psychological benefits.
- Paternity can be established through marriage (at conception, at birth, or anytime between), court order, or Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.

Contacts:
Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information and answers: pataff@iastate.edu.
Paternity Establishment: Addressing the How and Why

Purpose and Value of Information:

- Lack of paternal involvement may lead to increased risk of disease, learning disabilities, substandard academic achievement, behavioral problems, and teenage pregnancy.
- Fathers who acknowledge paternity in the hospital are more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
- Some evidence suggests that fathers who voluntarily acknowledge paternity are more likely to provide informal support than fathers with court-established paternity.
- Children for whom paternity has been established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources than their peers without legal fathers.
- When fathers provide for their children economically and are regularly and positively connected to them, whether or not they live in the home, children do better emotionally and have fewer behavioral problems.
- Paternity establishment may lead to child support payments and visitation.

Time Commitment: It will take less than 5 minutes to walk through the brochure and information with future and current parents.

Suggested Process:

- Go through the factsheet together (mom, dad, notary, hospital staff, etc.) to ensure that future and current parents understand how to establish paternity and why it is important. Have a staff member available to answer questions that may arise.
- Allow parents to complete the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit after learning more about paternity establishment from the factsheet. Consider having a notary public available to expedite the process.
Paternity Establishment: Addressing the How and Why

Materials

“Paternity Establishment: Addressing the How and Why”

Available for download at http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity- affidavit-program/
Sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit

Overview:
Future and current parents are often overwhelmed by the information presented to them about parenting, including suggested diet, parenting tactics, and more, which may come to them through conversations, news articles, scientific studies, and more. Helping parents understand how to complete a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit may make it easier for them to comprehend the process and the ease of doing so.

Learning Objective:
Future and current parents will understand how to complete a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit and the ease of doing so.

Key Points:
- Voluntary Paternity Affidavits require basic background information about the child, father, and mother to establish paternity.
- Completing the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit is a free and easy process.

Contacts:
Contact your local Child Support Recovery Unit office for more information and answers: https://goo.gl/TLHYG1 (case sensitive).

Purpose and Value of Information:
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
- Paternity establishment may lead to child support payments and visitation.
- Children with paternity established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources.
Sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit

**Time Commitment:** It will take less than 5 minutes to walk through the sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit to ensure that parents understand how to complete the process in the future.

**Suggested Process:**

- Work through the sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit together (mom, dad, notary, hospital staff, etc.) to ensure that parents understand how to complete the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit and the ease of doing so.

- Have a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit and notary public available to ensure that the parent uses the information gained through the sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.

**Materials**

“Sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit”

Available for download at [http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/](http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/)
Paternity Affidavits: What Do I Need to Bring?

Overview:
There are many things that future and current parents are thinking about bringing to different locations—the hospital, a vacation spot, the doctor’s office, a daycare facility, and more. By keeping an easy-to-follow guide that explains the forms of ID required to complete a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit in their wallet, future and current parents will have a better understanding of what they need to bring to establish paternity using this method.

Learning Objective:
Future and current parents will understand what identification they need to bring to establish paternity using a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.

Key Points:
- Parents need to bring an appropriate ID to complete the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.
- Parents can have their Voluntary Paternity Affidavit notarized and submitted at many locations throughout the state of Iowa.

Contacts:
Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information and answers: pataff@iastate.edu.

Purpose and Value of Information:
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
- Paternity establishment may lead to child support payments and visitation.
- Children with paternity established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources.
Paternity Affidavits: What Do I Need to Bring?

**Time Commitment:** It will take less than 5 minutes to help parents understand the appropriate identification needed to submit a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.

**Suggested Process:**

- Have business cards printed and prepared for future and current parents to take home with them at different events (e.g., birthing class, hospital room at birth, etc.).
- Remind parents that other options for identification can be found at the case-sensitive URL on the business card. In addition, remind them that other locations can be used for notarizing and submitting their Voluntary Paternity Affidavit.
- Consider distributing other materials with the business card (“Double Checking for These Common Errors,” “Paternity Establishment: Addressing the How and Why,” “Sample Voluntary Paternity Affidavit,” etc.) so that future and current parents understand other aspects of establishing paternity.

**Materials**

“**What Do I Need to Bring**”

Available for download at [http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/](http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/)
Frequently Asked Questions

Overview:
Future and current parents are likely to have many questions about paternity establishment, some of which may involve complicated answers. By having a central location for these answers, future and current parents will be able to work through this information at their own pace and reference the information in the future.

Learning Objective:
Future and current parents will have their questions related to paternity establishment answered when navigating the Frequently Asked Questions activity.

Contacts:
Contact your local Child Support Recovery Unit office for more information and answers: https://goo.gl/TLHYG1 (case sensitive).

Purpose and Value of Information:
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
- Paternity establishment may lead to child support payments and visitation.
- Children with paternity established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources.
Frequently Asked Questions

**Time Commitment:** It will take less than 10 minutes to read the Frequently Asked Questions and answer follow-up questions.

**Suggested Process:**

- If needed, have future and current parents go through the Frequently Asked Questions to address questions they may have about the paternity establishment process. If future and current parents are already interested in establishing paternity, it may not be necessary to complete this activity.

- Consider having hospital staff available to answer follow-up questions.

- Consider using this activity to answer parents’ questions while working through other activities in the curriculum.

**Materials**

“Frequently Asked Questions”

Available for download at [http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/](http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/)
Unmarried Parents Brochure

Overview:
Future and current parents are often uninformed about what paternity establishment is and why it is important. By having one document that begins to answer these questions, they will understand why completing the paternity affidavit is important for their child.

Learning Objective:
Future and current parents will understand what the paternity affidavit is and why it is important when reading the “Unmarried Parents” brochure.

Contacts:
Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information and answers: pataff@iastate.edu.

Purpose and Value of Information:
- Completing the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit accurately will create a legal father, which may lead to child support payments and visitation.
- Children with paternity established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources.

Time Commitment: It will take less than 10 minutes to read the “Unmarried Parents” brochure and answer follow-up questions.

Suggested Process:
- Consider having hospital staff available to answer follow-up questions.
- Consider having Spanish and English brochures available to meet the needs of diverse audiences.
Materials

"Unmarried Parents" brochure

Available for download at http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/
**Power of Two Video**

**Overview:**
Future and current parents are often uninformed about what paternity establishment is and why it is important. The *Power of Two* video can help them understand why it is important to complete the paternity affidavit. Though there are other documents in this curriculum that also explain this importance, the video is another way for future and current parents to learn about and understand this important information.

**Learning Objective:**
Future and current parents will understand why it is important to establish paternity after watching the *Power of Two* video.

**Contacts:**
Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information and answers: pataff@iastate.edu

**Purpose and Value of Information:**
- Completing the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit accurately will create a legal father, which may lead to child support payments and visitation.
- Children with paternity established are more likely to have access to emotional/psychological support, social entitlement, and financial resources.

**Time Commitment:** It will take less than 15 minutes to watch the *Power of Two* video and answer additional questions.

**Suggested Process:**
- Consider having hospital staff available to answer follow-up questions.
- Consider having Spanish and English videos available to meet the needs of diverse audiences (email pataff@iastate.edu to order DVD copies that contain both English and Spanish versions).
Power of Two Video

Materials

*Power of Two* video

Available for viewing at [http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/](http://childwelfareproject.hs.iastate.edu/paternity-affidavit-program/)

Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program ([pataff@iastate.edu](mailto:pataff@iastate.edu)) if you are interested in a DVD copy (in English and Spanish) of the *Power of Two* video.
Educating Employees About Paternity Affidavits

Hospital Employees

Overview:

Birthing hospitals are required to offer information to unmarried parents about paternity affidavits, but there is a lot of information to remember about this important topic. The Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program has been educating hospital employees about paternity affidavits through staff trainings, but this information can be reviewed below.

1. Introduction to Paternity Affidavits
2. Importance of completing Paternity Affidavits
3. Overview of acceptable forms of identification
4. Case Study – complete paternity affidavit for sample family
5. Explanation of most common mistakes made on Paternity Affidavit
6. Explanation of specific errors made by hospital
7. Explanation of questioning parents, hospital reimbursement program
8. Overview of available outreach materials, contact information

Learning Objective:

Hospital employees will review and understand the importance of educating unmarried parents about paternity affidavits.

Contacts:

Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information, answers, and specific resources: pataff@iastate.edu

You can also contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program if you are interested in a staff training.

Purpose and Value of Information:

- Reviewing past trainings will help employees to better understand the value of educating unmarried parents about paternity affidavits.
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
Hospital Employees

**Time Commitment:** The training for hospital employees takes 30-60 minutes, depending how background knowledge and questions asked.

**Suggested Process:**

- Consider having the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program come to a staff meeting to educate employees about the importance of establishing paternity.

**Materials**

Staff training PowerPoint

Case study (use information to complete a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit)

Outreach materials

Materials available by emailing the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program at pataff@iastate.edu.
Community Organization Employees

Overview:
Birthing hospitals are required to offer information to unmarried parents about paternity affidavits, parents may not remember this information or have completed the paternity affidavit.

By educating community organization employees, organizations will be able to explain the value of establishing paternity to unmarried parents. The Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program has been educating community organization employees about paternity affidavits through staff trainings, but this information can be reviewed below.

1. Introduction to Paternity Affidavits
2. Importance of completing Paternity Affidavits
3. Overview of acceptable forms of identification
4. Explanation of questioning parents
5. Overview of available outreach materials, contact information

Learning Objective:
Community organization employees will review and understand the importance of educating unmarried parents about paternity affidavits.

Contacts:
Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information, answers, and specific resources: pataff@iastate.edu

You can also contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program if you are interested in a staff training.

Purpose and Value of Information:
- Reviewing past trainings will help employees to better understand the value of educating unmarried parents about paternity affidavits.
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
Community Organization Employees

**Time Commitment:** The training for community organization employees takes approximately 30 minutes, depending on how background knowledge and questions asked.

**Suggested Process:**
Consider having the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program come to a staff meeting to educate employees about the importance of establishing paternity.

**Materials**
Staff training PowerPoint
Outreach materials
Materials available by emailing the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program at pataff@iastate.edu.
Child Support Recovery Unit Employees

**Overview:**
Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU) employees are interested in helping parents get questions answered and issues resolved surrounding children. One of these issues may be related to establishing paternity, which may be resolved by using a paternity affidavit. The Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program has been educating CSRU employees about paternity affidavits through staff trainings, but this information can be reviewed below.

1. Introduction to Paternity Affidavits
2. Importance of completing Paternity Affidavits
3. Overview of acceptable forms of identification
4. Case Study – complete paternity affidavit for sample family
5. Explanation of most common mistakes made on Paternity Affidavit
6. Explanation of specific errors made by hospital
7. Explanation of questioning parents, hospital reimbursement program
8. Overview of available outreach materials, contact information

**Learning Objective:**
CSRU employees will review and understand the importance of educating unmarried parents about paternity affidavits.

**Contacts:**
Contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program for more information, answers, and specific resources: pataff@iastate.edu

You can also contact the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program if you are interested in a staff training.

**Purpose and Value of Information:**
- Reviewing past trainings will help employees to better understand the value of educating unmarried parents about paternity affidavits.
- Fathers who establish paternity in the hospital may be more likely to be involved in their child’s life.
**Educating Employees About Paternity Affidavits**

**Facilitator Guide**

**Child Support Recovery Unit Employees**

**Time Commitment:** The training for hospital employees takes 30-60 minutes, depending how background knowledge and questions asked.

**Suggested Process:**

Consider having the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program come to a staff meeting to educate employees about the importance of establishing paternity.

**Materials**

Staff training PowerPoint

Case study (use information to complete a Voluntary Paternity Affidavit)

Outreach materials

Materials available by emailing the Voluntary Paternity Affidavit Program at pataff@iastate.edu.