

Establishing Paternity:

If your child was conceived or born when you were married, the husband is the legal father (unless the court decides otherwise). If you were not married, legal fatherhood has to be decided before a court will order child support. This process is called "establishing paternity ". Establishing paternity guarantees your child's right to receive financial support, medical support, tribal rights and inheritance rights from the father.

The length of time it takes to establish paternity depends on what steps will be necessary to complete the process. If the father signs and files the Wisconsin Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgment form (a paper which declares himself to be the father), the process is very fast. The Agency can provide you with the form at your request. If the father has not signed a Voluntary Paternity Acknowledgement form, a paternity action must be filed in court, which will take longer.

It is recommended that genetic testing be done to confirm that a man is the father of a child; this can take a month or so to schedule and receive the results. The cost of the test, usually less than \$200.00, can be paid initially by the Child Support Agency, subject to reimbursement from the father as confirmed by the test.