



## What You Need to Know Before Signing Your Baby's Birth Record

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**Florida Department of Health**  
**Bureau of Vital Statistics**

## Naming your Child



The birth record is a legal document that will follow your child throughout his or her life. Naming your child is an important decision for both you and your child.

Parents may give their child any name they choose. Traditionally, children born to married parents have the same last name as their father. A child can have the mother's surname, a hyphenated name made up of both the mother and father's surnames, or any name the parents choose.

Once the birth record has been filed and before the first birthday, changes to the child's name can be made as long as each parent named on the birth record is in agreement to the change. After the child's first birthday, the record can only be amended to correct errors or omissions, and depending on the type of correction, may require evidence or supporting documentation. After the first birthday, any change to the child's name that cannot be supported by documentary evidence must be accompanied by a court order directing such a change.




## When the Mother is Unmarried, How to List the Father

If a mother is unmarried, the father of the child can only be listed on the birth record if the father acknowledges paternity on the birth record, or through a court order.

By acknowledging paternity, the mother and father are attesting to the fact that the father is the biological father of the child. The father and mother agree to be responsible for the child's financial and medical support until he or she is an adult.

If the father is unavailable at the time of birth, his name can be added at any time after the record has been filed. This process goes through the Bureau of Vital Statistics' Paternity Unit.

## The Birth Record Interview



Once the birth registrar at the hospital has gathered the information from your medical records, you will be asked to review the personal information on the record to ensure it is correct. This information will be presented to you in the form of a "Hospital Review Sheet". Be sure to review this information very carefully before signing: is the baby's name spelled correctly, is your name spelled correctly, is your mailing address correct?. Once the record is registered, any changes require a \$20 amendment fee.

You will be offered two programs at the time of the completion of the birth record:

### Healthy Start Program

You will be asked if your child may be screened for the Healthy Start Program. The purpose of Healthy Start infant (postnatal) screening is to identify children who are at increased risk of a poor health outcome during the first year of life due to environmental, medical, nutritional, or behavioral risk factors. If your child is eligible for the program, with your consent, a Healthy Start representative will contact you regarding the available Healthy Start services.

### Obtaining your child's social security number

The birth record is a means by which you, as a parent, can obtain a social security number for your child. By indicating "Yes" on your child's birth record, the Social Security Administration (SSA) will issue a social security number for your child within four weeks. The number will be helpful to you in filing taxes, obtaining a passport for your child, admission to child care programs, school entrance, and other programs.

At the hospital, the birth registrar will provide you with a copy of a receipt indicating you have applied for your child's Social Security Number. At the bottom of this receipt is the Department of Health website with important information regarding care for your child, such as Florida SHOTS and Florida Childhood Immunizations, Florida KidCare Insurance, Florida Poison Information Network, and Child Support Enforcement.



## How to Obtain a Certification of Your Child's

### Birth Record

You will not *automatically* receive a certification of your child's birth record; the parents must apply for the birth certification. The hospital may provide you with a record of your child's birth, however, this document is not an official certification of the original birth record. With electronic registration of Florida birth records, the birth certification is available within a few days of the child's birth. You should be able to purchase one on your way home from the hospital!!

There are a couple of ways to purchase a birth certification:

1. Parents can obtain an official birth certification from the state office. Information on how to order can be found on our website at: [floridavitalstatisticsonline.com](http://floridavitalstatisticsonline.com)
2. A birth certification can also be obtained from any county health department vital statistics office. Fees vary throughout the state, so it's a good idea to verify the fee prior to submitting the request.

