

Get help

Vermont's parentage law can be straightforward or complicated, depending on the circumstances. Contact OCS if you need help establishing parentage for the purpose of child support.

Phone: 1-800-786-3214

Email: OCSCSU@vermont.gov

Some FAQs

Could our VAP be rejected?

Yes, it could be if someone else:

- Was found by a court to be the child's parent.
- Has a valid VAP on file. *OR*
- Is presumed to be a parent under the law — unless they file a *Denial of Parentage* (DOP) at the same time you file your VAP.

What if the birth mom was married to someone else?

If she was married/civilly joined to someone else up to 300 days before your child's birth, her spouse/former spouse is a **presumed parent** and must file a DOP at the same time you file your VAP.

Is a VAP legally binding?

Yes. A signed VAP is equal to a court determination of parentage. A challenge is only allowed in limited circumstances.

You have the right to talk to a lawyer before you sign. Once you file your VAP and it's accepted, you will be legally responsible for financially supporting the child.

Can I rescind a VAP/DOP?

Yes, you can take one back by:

- Filing a rescission form with Vital Records — within 60 days of its effective date. *OR*
- Starting a court proceeding — within 60 days of its effective date or the date of the first court hearing you're involved with related to the child.

Learn more

Go to dcf.vermont.gov/services/child-support/parentage.

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Free Interpretation Services

If English is not your first language and you need help understanding this information, please let us know.



PARENT'S GUIDE TO Acknowledging Parentage in VT

 **VERMONT**
DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT

Establishing parentage

This brochure:

- Summarizes the many ways to establish parentage in Vermont.
- Provides more details about the acknowledgment option.

The method you should use will depend on the circumstances of your child's conception or birth.

Through marriage/civil union:

If you are married or joined through civil union — when your child is born (or up to 300 days before your child is born if the marriage or union has ended):

- You don't need to do anything to establish parentage.
- The law presumes both spouses are the parents (**presumed parents**).
- The hospital staff (or licensed midwife if your child is born at home) will add both parents' names to the birth certificate and send it to Vital Records.

Through assisted reproduction:

If your child will be conceived with the help of assisted reproduction — in a certified laboratory:

1. Complete a *Consent to Parentage From Assisted Reproduction* and file it with Vital Records. **This will establish you as the intended parents.**
2. You may also complete & file a *Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage (VAP)*.

Through surrogacy:

If your child will be born through a gestational carrier (surrogate):

1. Hire an attorney to execute a *Gestational Carrier Agreement* before the child is conceived. **This will establish you as the intended parents.**
2. You may also complete a VAP and file it with Vital Records.

Through court:

If either of you has doubts about who the genetic parents are:

1. File an action to establish parentage in Superior Court - Family Division.
2. The court will make a determination of parentage.

Through voluntary acknowledgment:

If you are the genetic parents but are not married (to each other) when your child is born:

1. Complete a *Voluntary Acknowledgment of Parentage (VAP)*.
2. Sign in front of a witness who is at least 18 years old.
3. File it with Vital Records.

If you complete it at birth:

Hospital staff (or licensed midwife if your child is born at home) will add both names to your child's birth certificate and send your VAP to Vital Records.

If you complete it later on:

Send your VAP to Vital Records. If it's accepted, they'll make sure both parents' names are on the birth certificate.

What makes a VAP valid?

- It's signed/dated by both parents who are eligible to sign.
- It's signed/dated by a witness who is at least 18. *AND*
- It's filed with Vital Records.

Office of Vital Records
108 Cherry Street, PO Box 70
Burlington, VT 05402-0070
1-800-439-5008

Get forms: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/services/child-support/parentage>