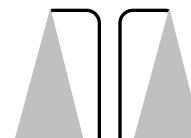


Press Release
Who's Your Daddy?



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Increasingly, paternity is being questioned. Some men ask for paternity testing "just to make sure" that they are the biological father. Some mothers are genuinely unsure, for example if a relationship ended and another one started around the time of conception.

A mother's application for child support requires her to provide proof of paternity. This can be a copy of the Birth Certificate with the father's name on it, or a Statutory Declaration that the father has signed, admitting paternity, or a Court Declaration that a specific man is the father of the child. To obtain the Court Declaration, a positive DNA test result is required, or a Court Order that a man has failed to undertake a test ordered by the Court. The Court may draw inferences from the refusal to be tested.

"The vast majority of tests are positive, but because a few are negative, it is best to have the test done when the child is young, rather than when the child is older and may be distressed by an unexpected result." said Victoria Mullings, Principal Lawyer of Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

After DNA testing is done, the father's name can be placed on the child's Birth Certificate. "This has legal implications, for example, it provides the child with evidence of parentage for an inheritance matter," said Ms Mullings. "It is also important for the child's sense of identity, belonging and self-esteem."

The Family Law Act provides for the child to have contact and a meaningful relationship with both parents.

Human Rights documents refer to the rights of the child and parentage certainty helps enable those rights to be achieved. The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the child has a right to know and be cared for by his or her parents. It also demands respect for the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations.

Peninsula Community Legal Centre is a not-for-profit organization that has been providing free legal services for more than 30 years. For more information about free legal services, or to enquire about assistance with a paternity dispute, please contact Peninsula Community Legal Centre on 9783 3600 or visit www.pclc.org.au.

END.

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