

**DID YOU KNOW ABOUT:**

**Minnesota's Safe Place for Newborns Law**

A newborn child can be left at the hospital with no legal consequences for the parents, **as long as it is left within 72 hours after its birth and it is unharmed.**

The hospital is not allowed to attempt to identify the mother or the person who left the newborn and cannot contact the police. The hospital may ask the person leaving the child about the newborn or mother's health, but the **person leaving the child is not required to give any information.**

The hospital will inform the welfare agency that the newborn has been left, but cannot contact the agency until after the person leaving the baby has left the hospital. The agency will seek placement for the child, but is not required to try to reunite the child with its family.

INFORM  
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CHILDREN'S LAW CENTER OF MINNESOTA

Know Your Rights

rights of **PREGNANT TEENS**

rights of **TEENAGE PARENTS**

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## I think I might be pregnant. What should I do?

Ask for medical care related to a potential pregnancy. Parental consent is not necessary to receive this type of health care. A doctor will tell you if you are pregnant and can guide you through several options, including:

- **Raising your Child:** If you choose to raise your child, both you and the father are responsible for the child.
- **Adoption:** In order to place your child for adoption, you need consent of both parents of the child. If the father of the child is unknown, adoption is still an option. Also, if you are under 18 and not married to the father of the child, you will need your parents' consent to place the child for adoption. After consenting to the adoption, you will have 10 days to change your mind. If your child is adopted, you will lose all parental rights over your child.
- **Abortion:** Abortion may be an option, depending on how far along your pregnancy is. A doctor must give you certain information about the abortion at least 24 hours before it takes place. If you are under 18, your parents must be notified of your decision to have an abortion at least 48 hours before the abortion will be performed.

### What if it's not possible to inform my parents, or I don't want them to know?

A judge can grant a "judicial bypass" to allow the abortion without notifying your parents. Your clinic will be able to walk you through this process.

### Can anyone force me to have an abortion or prevent me from having one?

No. Only the person who is pregnant has the right to make the decision whether to have an abortion or proceed with the pregnancy.

## I want to raise my child, but how will I financially support it?

You may be eligible for assistance through the Minnesota Family Investment Program and other programs (contact your county human services agency).

### What about child support payments?

If the parents of a child do not live together, it is likely one parent will have to pay the other child support, in order to share the costs of raising the child.

### How much will the child support payment be?

The court will look at both parents' incomes and the costs of raising the child to determine how much each parent should contribute.

### What if a parent doesn't pay child support, despite a court's order to do so?

There can be serious legal consequences for that parent.



## I think I'm the father of a child. What are my rights?

Are you married to the baby's mother? You are presumed to be the baby's father if you were married to the mother when the baby was born. If you were not married, you may want to establish paternity.

### What does it mean to establish paternity?

Establishing paternity means that you will be legally recognized as the father of the child, giving you parental rights and responsibility for the child.

### How do I establish paternity?

Paternity can be established by 2 methods:

Both parents sign a Recognition of Parentage form **OR**

By court proceeding (initiated by the mother or the man believing he is the father).

### What are my rights if I establish paternity?

- You can ask the court for custody of the child.
- You can ask the court to grant you parenting time.
- You have the right to object to adoption of the child if you wish to raise the child.

(Until paternity is established, an unmarried mother will have sole custody of the child.)

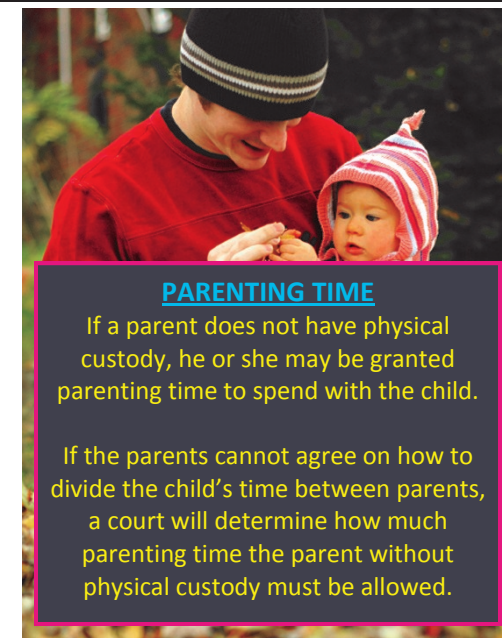
(If you may have fathered a child that may be placed for adoption, you may register with the Father's Adoption Registry within 30 days of birth so that you receive notice and can participate in the proceeding. Visit: <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/registry/reginst.htm>.)



### CUSTODY

Legal custody means you have the right to make decisions about how the child is raised, including education, health care and religion.

Physical custody means you are responsible for providing residence and day-to-day care of the child. Parents may have joint custody, so they share responsibilities, or one parent may have custody.



### PARENTING TIME

If a parent does not have physical custody, he or she may be granted parenting time to spend with the child.

If the parents cannot agree on how to divide the child's time between parents, a court will determine how much parenting time the parent without physical custody must be allowed.