

Registration of Births of Children

whose parents are not married to each other

Useful Addresses

General Register Office

Lo Call 1890 25 20 76
www.groireland.ie

Deed Poll Section

The Four Courts
01 - 888 6870
01 - 888 6507
01 - 888 6508
www.courts.ie

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The National Federation of Services for
Unmarried Parents and their Children

If you would like to talk to an information Officer
LoCall: 1890 252 084

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If at all possible it is important to have the names of both parents on your child's birth certificate.

Why is it important to have a father's name on a child's birth cert?

Children need to know as much as possible about both their parents, so that they will have a good sense of their own identity and personal history. Having the father's name on your child's birth certificate helps to establish your child's sense of identity as s/he grows up.

3 important things to remember:

1. Having the father's name on the birth certificate does not give the father any rights in respect of his child.
2. Having the father's name on the birth certificate does not prevent the mother from getting One-Parent Family Payment.
3. A child has a right to be financially maintained by both parents and to inherit from them once paternity of the child has been established. This applies whether or not the father's name is on the birth certificate.

When should a birth be registered?

The birth of a child should be registered within 3 months of the birth.

How can the father's name be registered?

- Both parents can register the birth together by going to the registrar in the hospital or local registrar's office or
- Either parent can present to the registrar a form signed by the other parent, and correctly witnessed, called a Statutory Declaration (available from the registrar's office) swearing that he is the father, or
- Either parent can bring to the registrar a copy of any court order naming the father in respect of the child. e.g. access, maintenance or guardianship and have the father's name entered on the birth certificate, without the consent of the other parent. The other parent will be notified. The consent of both parents is required to change the child's surname.

Re-Registration

If the child has been registered in the mother's name alone, it is possible to re-register the birth at any future date in order to have the father's details included using any of the methods outlined above for registration.

Choosing a surname

Parents can choose

- Mother's surname.
- Father's surname (but only if the father's name is going on the birth certificate and he agrees).



- Both parents' surnames – a double-barrelled surname – hyphenated and in any order (but, again, only if the father's name is going on the birth certificate and he agrees).

Changing a child's surname in the Birth Register

It is possible to change the surname of a child if the parents marry following the birth of their child and where both parents agree.

If the birth is being re-registered to add the father's name and the original registration was after October 1997 the surname already chosen can be changed where both parents agree.

If the birth is being re-registered to add the father's name and the original registration was before October 1997 then a surname must be chosen on re-registration as no surname was assigned at the original registration.

Other ways of changing a child's surname

The surname of a child can be changed by Deed Poll or by Common Usage but neither of these can change the entry in the register of births. The **Deed Poll** which is the official process by which a person changes his / her name, is presented together with the birth certificate. See over for contact details of the Deed Poll Office.

A person's name can be changed by **common usage** - that is where a new name is adopted and it is "commonly used" by that person, for example on school reports, bank or post office accounts etc. It is possible to use this name for official purposes, e.g. passports, once you can show on two pieces of formal identification that this is the name you are actually using.

If you are/were married to a man who is NOT the father of your baby and you want to put the birth father's name on the birth certificate.

In order to proceed you must have a sworn statement from the father swearing he is the father and have either:

a sworn statement from your husband saying he is not the father

or

deed of separation and a sworn statement from you saying you were living apart from your husband for more than 10 months before the birth of your child

or

an Irish divorce dated, or stating that you were living apart from your husband, at least 10 months before your child was born. (To make sure a foreign divorce is valid it must be referred to the General Register Office.)

or

any court order which names the father as father.