

# **YOUR PATERNITY CASE**

**Determining Paternity, Establishing Custody and  
Setting Child Support**

## **3a**

**A DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE**

**Including Helpful Forms**

## **HOW TO BEGIN A PATERNITY CASE**

**YOUR FUTURE AND YOUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE MAY DEPEND ON THE OUTCOME OF YOUR CASE. YOU SHOULD CONSIDER USING A LAWYER TO ENSURE THAT YOUR RIGHTS ARE FULLY PROTECTED.**

**HOWEVER, IF YOU DO NOT WISH TO USE A LAWYER, ATTACHED IS A "CHECKLIST" FOR A SIMPLE PATERNITY CASE.**

**THE CHECKLIST IS NOT INTENDED TO BE COMPREHENSIVE OR APPLICABLE TO EACH AND EVERY CASE. THEY ARE INTENDED ONLY AS AN AID TO YOU IN UNDERSTANDING AND COMPLYING WITH COURT PROCEDURE.**

**THE CHECKLIST IS NOT "GUARANTEED" IN ANYWAY.**

## **CHECKLIST FOR PATERNITY CASES**

A legal case filed under the Uniform Parentage Act is called a “paternity” case. A “paternity” case can be brought by a father or mother or even the child (after a certain age). The goal of a paternity case is to establish whether a person is or is not a natural parent of a child and if parentage is established, to determine how the child will be parented and who should help pay for the support of the child.

### 1. Docketing Information Sheet (LR1-Form E)

This is an information sheet to alert the court that CHILDREN are involved in the legal case. It should be filled out as completely as possible. When completed, give it to the Clerk of the Court along with all the other papers.

### 2. Petition for Determination of Paternity

This is the formal request for the court to DETERMINE parentage, ESTABLISH a Parenting Plan and ASSESS child support. A copy of the Petition must be promptly served upon the other party (called the Respondent),

### 3. Notice of Hearing and Order to Provide Documents

A Notice of Hearing and Order to Provide Documents for a Paternity pre-trial and Interim Support. This hearing is Mandatory.

### 4. Order for Mediation

An Order for Mediation schedules an Information Session of Children and Separation to alert you to changing parental roles while the case is happening. This session is Mandatory.

### 5. Summons and Return of Service

A SUMMONS is notice to the Respondent that a formal written response must be filed with the court within 30 days after the Summons, Petition, Notice of Hearing and Order to Provide Documents and Order for Mediation are served.

If there is no response after proper service, the Judge can then enter a Default Decree.

## **SERVICE IS VERY IMPORTANT**

**“Serve” means placing the Petition (as well as the Summons, Notice of Hearing and Order to Provide Documents and Order for Mediation) in the hands of the other party; in other words, service must be personal. Mailing the papers is NOT good enough, not even Certified Mail.**

**Anyone who is over 18 and who is not a party to the case may serve the papers. That means that the Petitioner CANNOT serve the papers. The Sheriff’s Office or a professional process server can service but they usually charge a fee. If the court has already found that you can’t pay court fees, the Sheriff will serve the papers for free.**

**To prove that service is done, ask the person who performed the service to complete a RETURN OF SERVICE and then make sure it is filed with the Clerk of the Court.**

6. After a RESPONSE is filed, you may request a hearing using a REQUEST FOR HEARING form. See the Judge’s Trial Court Assistant for help on requests for hearing and notices of hearing.

If no written response has been filed within 30 days of service, you may apply to the Court for a “Default Decree.”

8. The parties must develop a PARENTING PLAN by the time the Final Decree is entered. You may develop your own Parenting Plan so long as it is specific and complete. A sample Parenting Plan is available in this Packet.

If you don’t develop a Parenting Plan very soon after the legal case is filed, the court will order you to attend MEDIATION at the Family Court Services. Mediation is not free but the fee is based upon your income. Two or three sessions are usually enough but sometimes more sessions will be required.

8. When all your disputes have been resolved (either by your agreement or by court decision) a FINAL DECREE is entered. This is the document, which marks the official end of the case. A sample Final Decree is available in this Packet.

### **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:**

Santa Fe Police Dept.	955-5080	Child Support Hearings	827-5050
Santa Fe Sheriff	986-2460	Court Clerk	476-0134
Rio Arriba Sheriff	753-3320	Mediation Services	827-5051
Los Alamos Sheriff	662-8028	Domestic Violence Section	827-4350

**DOCKET INFORMATION SHEET**

<b>CASE NO.</b>
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**USE THIS FORM ONLY IF THE CASE INVOLVES MINOR CHILDREN (UNDER 18). PLEASE SUBMIT THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE CLERK OF THE COURT.**

PETITIONER-Name, Address, Telephone No.
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RESPONDENT-Name, Address, Telephone No.
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Date of Birth: _____
Social Security No. _____

Date of Birth: _____
Social Security No. _____

Attorney for Petitioner
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Attorney for Respondent
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What kind of case is this?
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Does this case involve ANOTHER case, old or still pending in this or another state or country? If so, please list them by name and number:
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_____ Signature of the Petitioner
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