



"Paternity acknowledgement" is a voluntary process when an unwed father becomes legally recognized as the biological father for child support purposes. This acknowledgement does not establish a legal, court-recognized paternity, unless it is then taken to the Rayon level. Once the Rayon court recognizes the paternity, the father then has legal, enforceable visitation rights, and, of course, the financial support responsibilities as well.

Establishing paternity can be complicated without the help of a legal expert. It may be initiated in several ways:

1. upon application of both the mother and father of the child;
2. upon application of the man who claims to be the child's or children's father; or
3. upon a court-determined judicial decision.

In the first scenario, paternal affiliation is established upon application of two people who are not married to each other. Such application may be lodged with the Public Civil Status Act Registration Authority ("PCSARA"), either prior to or after the child's birth.

In the second scenario, the man who is not married to the child's mother may lodge with the PCSARA an application to recognize him as the father of the child. This includes situations where the mother has died, if she has been pronounced missing, deemed incapable, or if she has not lived with the child for at least six months and does not take care of him/her. This application is accepted on the condition that the father's record has already been entered in the Birth Register in accordance with the Code (Article 135).

Finally, in the third scenario, any information confirming parentage of the child, and collected in accordance with the Ukrainian Civil Procedure Code, constitutes sufficient grounds to establish parental affiliation by judicial decision. As such, any person who simply claims to be the child's father may take the legal action to establish parental affiliation (with proper evidence, of course).