

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE

Your child's birth certificate lasts forever. Please be certain the information on the certificate is accurate and complete *before* you sign it.

- The birth certificate is a legal document.
- An amendment form is required to make corrections to the birth certificate.
- The birth certificate will become a two-page document if an amendment is requested after the original has been processed.
- Many changes on the birth certificate require the applicant to go to court for a court order, including reversing the order of last names (surnames).
- Parents may have problems receiving benefits, traveling on an airline, obtaining a passport or social security number for their child if the birth certificate is not true and correct.
- It can take a couple months to apply an amendment. The processing time for amendments can be located on the California Department of Public Health-Vital Records website at:

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/certlic/birthdeathmar/Pages/ProcessingTimes.aspx>

Common mistakes that require amendments or court orders:

- Misspelled first, middle, and last names of child and/or parents
- Incorrect birth place or date of birth of parent(s)
- Reversed order of last names (surnames)
- Adding extra names to parent(s) or child later
- Incorrect gender (sex) of child
- Incorrect birth date

Errors on birth certificates
cannot be corrected on the original certificate.

The **original** birth certificate **does not** change, but an amendment is attached to create a **two-page** document.

- ✓ Parents, please review the information on the birth certificate carefully before you sign it.
- ✓ Your signature confirms that you have reviewed the information and that the facts are correct.

Amendment forms may be obtained at the local health department or county recorder's office.



Importance of Collecting Complete and Accurate Birth Certificate Information

Why is the birth certificate information collected?

The birth certificate information is collected based on California Health and Safety Code Section (H&SC) 102425. This law lists all the information required to be on the California birth certificate. This law also makes all medical information confidential.

What is the birth certificate information used for?

The information collected is used to record what happened during pregnancy, labor, and delivery, and any issues the newborn experienced. The information will be used to understand and help prevent birth defects, preterm babies, maternal deaths, and other labor, delivery and birth outcomes. Information collected also assists local and state public health leaders in making decisions that address programs needed in the community such as diabetes care, teen pregnancy, WIC (Women Infants Children), etc.

What birth certificate information is confidential on the birth certificate?

All medical information is considered confidential and not released to the public. This includes the parents' race, education, occupation, social security number(s), and address. The only persons that may access the confidential information are the California Department of Public Health, local county health department, persons with a valid scientific interest as determined by the State Registrar and Committee for Protection of Human Subjects, parent who signed the certificate or parent giving birth, and the child named on the birth certificate. Reference H&SC 102430.

What if the parent does not want to provide the information?

All information is required by law with the exception of the parents' race, occupation, education, and social security number(s). Although not required, race, occupation, and education are very important for understanding and eliminating negative outcomes and developing needed programs.

Who collects the birth certificate information?

The birth certificate information is collected by the birth clerk and it is sent to the local county health department who forwards it to the California Department of Public Health - Vital Records.

Who should I contact if I still have questions?

Please contact the California Department of Public Health - Vital Records at (916) 445-8494.