

**Differences Between Paternity Court Action  
and the Recognition of Parentage (ROP)**

	<b>Paternity Court Action</b>	<b>Recognition of Parentage</b>
<b>How is paternity established?</b>	By court order	By execution (signing) of the Recognition of Parentage (ROP) form
<b>What if a parent is a minor?</b>	A Guardian <i>ad Litem</i> (a family member or an adult person appointed by the court) will represent the minor parent's interests in court.	Minors can sign a Recognition of Parentage form, but it will not have legal effect until 6 months after the minor parent turns age 18.
<b>What about custody and parenting time rights?</b>	Either parent can make requests to the court for custody and/or parenting time in a paternity case. The court must determine that the awards of custody and parenting time are in the child's best interests.	A ROP does not establish a father's rights to custody and parenting time. The mother retains sole legal and physical custody until an order is entered granting custody to someone else. The ROP provides a <i>basis</i> for bringing a separate court action for custody or parenting time.
<b>Will I have genetic testing?</b>	The mother, alleged father, or the public authority may ask the court to order genetic testing. If the county pays for the test, it may request reimbursement for costs.	No genetic testing is done after the ROP is signed
<b>Will I have an attorney?</b>	The court may appoint an attorney to represent either parent in a paternity case, if the parent's income is low. The parent must ask for an attorney. The county attorney does not represent either parent.	You do not have the right to a court-appointed attorney in child support matters, custody and/or parenting time actions. You may hire a private attorney or contact a legal services agency for help. The county attorney does not represent either parent.
<b>How long is the process?</b>	Paternity cases typically take several months from the time the action is filed to a final paternity court order.	You can sign a ROP before a notary at a hospital or county office. The ROP is effective as soon as the Minnesota Department of Vital Statistics accepts it for filing. Generally, this is faster than getting a court order establishing paternity.
<b>What about child support?</b>	Child support is set or reserved in a paternity case.	Child support will be set in a separate court action.