

Registration of Births

Time for Registration

The birth of every child born in Guyana must be registered within 21 days of the birth.

Who must register?

Where the parents are married the father or mother is required to provide particulars to the registrar of births at the nearest registration center of the district in which the birth took place.

The registrar completes a registration form, which the parent then signs.

If, for any reason, neither the father nor the mother is able to register the birth, a nurse must register the birth.

If you live in a remote area you do not have to attend at a registration center but can send the particulars of the birth in writing to the registrar at the nearest registration center. This is usually the Community Health Centre.

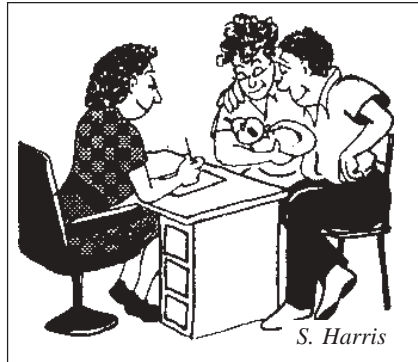
Registration after 21 days

If the birth is not registered **within 3 months** of the baby being born, or **within 9 months** if you live in a remote area, you can go to a registrar and give the particulars for her/him to complete a registration form that you will then sign.

However, if **more than 12 months** have passed since the baby was born the birth can only be registered with the authority of the Registrar General.

Particulars to be given

The prescribed particulars which you must give to the registrar



who then enters them on the registration form includes: when and where the birth took place, the names, sex, race, weight and length of the child and details of the mother and father.

The name and surname of the mother have to be given as they were at the time of the birth as well as her maiden surname, her address, race, marital status, age, occupation and education. If the parents are married the registrar will want to know the names, race, age, occupation and education of the father.

Children born out of Wedlock

If the parents are not married to each other the mother does not have to give details of the father if she does not wish to: the part of the registration form giving particulars of the father may be left blank.

Particulars of the father may however be entered (and can only be entered) at the joint request of the mother and the father, in which case both will sign the registration form. A father's name cannot be added to the birth register after the birth is registered.

Entry of the father's name on the registration form is evidence of paternity for the purpose of maintenance proceedings (see Section Number 11 on Child Maintenance) and could also be evidence of adultery if the mother or father is married to someone else at the time.

Choice of Name

The registrar will ask in what **surname or family name** the child is to be brought up. This does not need to be the surname used by either the mother or the father but it is usual for a child born in wedlock or whose parents are living together to take the surname or family name of the father.

The mother of a child born out of wedlock can give the child any forenames and surnames she chooses, even the father's surname without his consent.

Parents usually choose a child's forenames when registering the birth and the names may be confirmed later by religious baptism.

If no forenames are chosen at the time of registration the birth can still be registered with just the surname being given. The words

'Not Stated' will be put on the register form. Forenames given to a child within 12 months, after registration (or longer with the written authority of the local magistrate) can be entered by the Registrar General on a new registration form upon receipt of an application form signed by a parent. This applies if no forenames have been entered at the time of registration or if the forenames later given are different from those registered

It is better to give the child a name at the time the birth is registered, since in some cases a Court Order will be required to insert a name at a later date.

Whilst there is no law against using different forenames and/or surnames at different times for different purposes this can be confusing for legal purposes. Anyone can change her/his forename and /or surname at any time simply by starting to use another name. But it is usual to make a deed poll (in case of a child the deed poll is made by a parent or guardian) formally evidencing the change of name to avoid difficulties in obtaining passports and school registration.

Re-registration upon Marriage of Parents of a child born out of Wedlock

If the mother and father subsequently marry they can apply to the Registrar General within 3 months of the marriage to have the birth re-registered.

Correcting errors on the registration form

A registrar may only correct minor clerical errors made on a registration form. Any other errors may only be corrected with the written authority of a magistrate.

Birth Certificates

A birth certificate contains the names, sex, date and place of birth of the child, the mother's full name at the time of birth, her maiden name, and the father's name and date of registration.

A birth certificate is not issued at the time of registration but must be applied for through the post office 30 days after registration.