



Social Security

Social Security Numbers For Children

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When you have a baby, one of the things that should be on your “to do” list is getting a Social Security number for your baby. The easiest time to do this is when you give information for your child’s birth certificate. If you wait, you can apply for a number at any Social Security office.

Why should I get a number for my child?

If your child is born in the United States or is a U.S. citizen born abroad, you need a Social Security number to claim your child as a dependent on your income tax return. Your child may also need a number if you plan to:

- Open a bank account for the child;
- Buy savings bonds for the child;
- Obtain medical coverage for the child; or
- Apply for government services for the child.

Must my child have a Social Security number?

No. But it is a very good idea to apply for a number right after your baby is born. Getting a Social Security

number for your newborn is **voluntary**. You should apply for your baby's number before the child is 1 year old. If you do not, it may take up to 12 weeks longer, because we will contact the state office that issued the birth record to verify the record. We do this to prevent people from using fraudulent birth records to obtain Social Security numbers to establish false identities.

How do I apply?

When you give information for your baby's birth certificate, you will be asked whether you want to apply for a Social Security number for your baby. If you say "yes," you need to provide both parents' Social Security numbers if you can. Even if you do not know both parents' Social Security numbers, you can still apply for a number for your child.

If you wait to apply for your child's number at a Social Security office, you will need to:

- Fill out an application (you need to provide both parents' Social Security numbers);
- Show evidence of your child's age, identity and citizenship; and
- Show evidence of your identity.

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Social Security will assign your child a number and mail the Social Security card directly to you.

What if my child is adopted?

Your adopted child can be assigned a number before the adoption is complete, but you may want to wait. Then you can apply for the number using your child's new name and your names as parents. If you want to claim your child for tax purposes while the adoption is still pending, you need to contact the Internal Revenue Service for Form W-7A, *Application for Taxpayer Identification Number for Pending U.S. Adoptions*.

What does it cost?

There is no charge for a Social Security number and card. If someone contacts you and wants to charge you for getting a number or card, or for any Social Security service, please remember that Social Security services are free. You can report anyone attempting to charge you by calling our Office of the Inspector General hotline at **1-800-269-0271**.

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What if I lose the card?

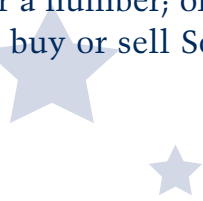
If you lose the card, contact any Social Security office. We will replace it at no charge. We recommend that you keep your child's Social Security card in a safe place. It is an important document. **DO NOT** carry it with you.

Social Security number misuse

If you think someone is using your child's Social Security number fraudulently, you should file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission by:

- Internet—
[*www.consumer.gov/idtheft*](http://www.consumer.gov/idtheft)
- Telephone—
1-877-IDTHEFT (1-877-438-4338)
- TTY—
202-326-2502

It is against the law to:

- Use someone else's Social Security number unlawfully;
 - Give false information when applying for a number; or
 - Alter, buy or sell Social Security cards.
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Your privacy

When you apply for a Social Security number, all information provided is kept confidential and is not disclosed, except when required by law.

Contacting Social Security

For more information, visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov or call toll-free **1-800-772-1213** (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**). We can answer specific questions and provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

We treat all calls confidentially. We also want to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service. That is why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some telephone calls.



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