

# Social Security Numbers For Children



**Y**ou have a lot of things on your mind when you have a baby. We realize that getting a Social Security number isn't at the top of your list of "things to do." However, we're using this opportunity to tell you why it's important that you get a number for your baby and how easy it is to get one. We'll also answer some other questions you might have about Social Security numbers.

Visit our website at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

## **Why Should I Get A Number For My Baby?**

The main reason you should get a Social Security number is to claim your baby as a dependent on your income tax return. Any child you claim as a dependent on your income tax return must have a number, regardless of age. Getting a Social Security number is just the beginning of the valuable protection and benefits your child may be eligible for in the future.

## **Are There Other Advantages?**

Young children need Social Security numbers for many reasons, in addition to the tax reason.

Your child needs a number if you plan to —

- open a bank account;
- buy savings bonds;
- obtain medical coverage; or
- apply for some kind of government services for your child.

## **Must My Baby Have A Social Security Number Now?**

No! Getting a Social Security number for your newborn is strictly **voluntary**.

## **How Do I Apply?**

You have a choice. You can —

- apply for a number in the hospital when you furnish information for your baby's birth certificate; or
- apply for a number from us later at one of our offices.



It's easy to apply at birth. When you give information for your baby's birth certificate, you'll be asked if 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. We'll assign your baby a number and mail the Social Security card directly to you.

If you wait to apply for your baby's number at one of our offices, you'll 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.

## **What If I Can't Provide Each Parent's Number?**

When you apply for a Social Security number for children under age 18, you should provide each parent's Social Security number **unless** —

- the parent does not have a Social Security number; or
- the parent's Social Security number is unknown.

If you can't provide the parent's Social Security number for one of those reasons, we'll still be able to assign the child a Social Security number.

## **What If My Child Is Adopted?**

Getting a Social Security number for adopted children is the same as getting one for a biological child. While you can get the number before the adoption is complete, you may want to wait. Then you can apply for the number with your names as parents and your child's new name.

As prospective adoptive parents, you may want to claim your child for tax purposes while the adoption is still pending. If so, 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 never a charge for a Social Security card and number. If you're contacted by someone who wants to charge you for getting a card or number, or for any Social Security service, please be aware that all services are available **free of charge** from us.

## **What If I Lose The Card?**

Keep your baby's Social Security card in a safe place. It's an important document. However, if you lose the card, we will replace it at no charge. Just contact your nearest Social Security office.

## **Social Security Number Misuse**

Sometimes more than one person uses the same Social Security number, either on purpose or not. You should let us know if you believe someone is using a Social Security number that belongs to someone else.

It's against the law to —

- use someone else's Social Security number;
- give false information when applying for a number; or
- alter, buy or sell Social Security cards.

Anyone convicted of these crimes is subject to stiff fines and/or imprisonment.

## **Your Privacy**

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



## **Protection For Your Family**

Have you thought about your child's welfare if you're not able to work or if you should die? If you're a young person who has worked and paid Social Security taxes for as few as 18 months, it's possible for you to become eligible for disability benefits for you and your family. Some of your taxes also go toward survivors insurance if you should die. And, Social Security benefits go up automatically with the cost of living. Social Security is here to help you and your family when you need it most.





## **Your Future With Social Security**

Some people are concerned that Social Security won't be there in the future, because we are living longer, healthier lives and receive benefits longer. Of course it will, but change will be needed to meet the demands of the times since there will be fewer workers paying benefits and the percentage of older Americans will greatly increase. For more information about the present and what may lie ahead, call us for a copy of the booklet, *The Future of Social Security* (Publication No. 05-10055).

## **For More Information**

You can get recorded information about Social Security 24 hours a day, including weekends and holidays, by calling Social Security's toll-free number, **1-800-772-1213**. You can speak to a service representative between the hours of 7 am. and 7 p.m. on business days. Our lines are busiest early

in the week and early in the month, so, if your business can wait, it's best to call at other times. Whenever you call, have your Social Security number handy.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our toll-free TTY number. 1-800-325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. on business days.

You can also reach us on the Internet. Type *www.ssa.gov* to access Social Security information.

We treat all calls confidentially - whether they're made to our toll-free numbers or to one of our local offices. We also want to make sure that you receive accurate and courteous service. That's why we have a second Social Security representative monitor some incoming and outgoing telephone calls.



[www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

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