

Hi, in this video, I will talk about how a parent, guardian, or custodian of a minor can change their child's name. If you need a court order declaring your child's gender identity, which can include a name change, you need to follow a different procedure. Visit mdcourts.gov/genderidentity to learn more. If you're in the right place, let's get started.

It's important to know that the Department of Health has a process for changing a child's name if they are under 12 months old, and if both parents agree. For children older than 12 months, you'll need a court order. Let's go through the steps of how to legally change your child's name with a court order.

CHAPTER HEADING: COURT ORDER

The first step is to file a Petition for Change of Name of a Minor. You can use Form CC-DR-062. You'll have to provide the minor's current name, any former names, and provide information about their parents, guardians, or custodians, including whether they speak a language other than English. Also, explain why you are asking for the name change. It cannot be for an illegal or fraudulent reason. And explain why the change is in the child's best interest. In other words, tell the court why the change is important and how it will affect them.

Attach documentation to the petition that shows the minor's current name. This could be a copy of their birth certificate, driver's license, or passport. You'll also need to attach written consents to the petition. Let's talk about consents.

CHAPTER HEADING: CONSENTS

This process is easier when everyone consents or agrees in writing to change a child's name. Parents, guardians, and custodians can use Form CC-DR-063. If the child is at least ten years old, they can use Form CC-DR-119 to consent to the change. If they are under age ten, you'll need to indicate in the petition whether the child agrees or disagrees with the name change. If they are not able to give a preference, just say so in the petition.

Once your petition is ready to go, the next step is to file it, along with the attachments, in a Maryland circuit court. Each county as well as Baltimore City has one. You can file the paperwork in the court where the child lives or where any of the child's parents, guardians, or custodians live. There is a filing fee, but you may be eligible for a waiver based on your income. Visit mdcourts.gov/feewaiver to learn more.

So, what's next?

CHAPTER HEADING: WHAT'S NEXT?

It depends on whether everyone consents to your petition. If the written consent of a parent, guardian, or custodian is not included with the petition, the court will issue a notice. You must provide a copy of the notice, your petition, and all attachments to anyone who hasn't consented. You do this through a formal process called service. Learn more about service at mdcourts.gov/ccservice.

Once someone is served, they have 30 days to file a written consent or objection to the name change. They can use Form CC-DR-063. Watch part 4 of this series to learn what happens if someone files an objection. Failure to file a written consent or objection within 30 days may be considered consent to the name change.

If the court has questions or if anyone has filed an objection, the court will hold a hearing. If the court decides that the name change is in the best interest of your child, it will issue an order. You'll receive a certified copy by mail, or you will need to contact the clerk's office to get copies.

You can use the order to change your child's name on their driver's license, birth certificate, passport, and other identity documents. It can also be used to update their name with the Social Security Administration or other agencies and institutions.

One last thing before you go.

CHAPTER HEADING: ONE LAST THING

Legally changing a child's name has no effect on the legal rights or obligations of parents, guardians, or custodians. In other words, changing a name does not alter any obligation to care for a child or pay child support. It also does not affect custody rights, which are also referred to as parenting time and decision-making authority.

I hope this video has been helpful. If you need more information go to mdcourts.gov/namechange. Thanks for watching.