FREE PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

New baby records checklist

A new baby arrives with a small stack of paperwork of their own. Here is what to collect, where each piece comes from, and a line to write where you put it.

Sources checked on November 27, 2026. Every fact links to the office it came from.

Birth certificates come from the state, not the federal government. The CDC keeps a list of every state's vital records office. CDC, National Center for Health Statistics

The first papers

- [ ] **Birth certificate**
  From the vital records office of the state where the baby was born. The federal government does not distribute them.
  Kept where _____

- [ ] **Social Security number and card**
  Social Security says a first number is free to request.
  Kept where _____

- [ ] **Vaccine record**
  Ask your child's doctor for a copy and keep it with the birth certificate.
  Kept where _____

- [ ] **Hospital discharge papers and the first doctor's visit notes**
  Kept where _____

If you will travel abroad: a passport

The State Department's rules for children under 16, in its own words where they matter.

- [ ] **Apply in person, with Form DS-11**
  All children under 16 apply in person with two parents or guardians.
  Kept where _____

- [ ] **Both parents or guardians agree**
  Both must approve the passport, and both should go with the child to apply. The State Department explains what to do if one cannot.
  Kept where _____

- [ ] **The paper birth certificate**
  An original or a certified paper copy. A mobile or electronic birth certificate is not accepted.
  Kept where _____

- [ ] **The child's Social Security number, if they have one**
  Kept where _____

Official sources

- CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, Where to Write for Vital Records: www.cdc.gov/nchs/w2w/index.htm
- Social Security Administration, Request Social Security number for the first time: www.ssa.gov/number-card/request-number-first-time
- U.S. Department of State, Apply for a Child Under 16: travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/need-passport/under-16.html

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