



Adoption Terms

Interstate Adoption: The adoptive placement of a child who is a resident of one state with adoptive parents who are legal residents of another state. Adoption paperwork, such as home studies, must be reviewed by the state the child is residing in before the child can leave the state for its new home.

International Adoption: The adopted child comes from another country and often involves re-adopting the child in the United States (even if formally adopted in another country). Before the Adoption is granted, approval must be obtained from both domestic and foreign governments.

Re-Adoption: The practice of adopting a foreign child in the United States after the child has already been adopted by its adoptive parents in the foreign country of its origin. The most common reason for a re-adoption is to allow the child to obtain a United States birth certificate showing the adoptive parents as though they were the biological parents of the child. This procedure also enables the adopted foreign child to have a local birth certificate that does not set the child apart from other children who were born in the United States.

Home study: A process by which a social worker interviews prospective adoptive parents concerning their background and their ability to raise a child. Often this is done in a series of interviews, with at least one interview in the home. The purpose of the home study is to help the court determine whether the adoptive parents are qualified to adopt a child, based on the criteria that have been established by state law.

Agency Adoption: Adoption that is facilitated by a State Licensed Agency. Adoptive parents can work with either public agencies or private agencies that offer a variety of adoption services.

Stepparent Adoption: A process by which the non-custodial parent is released from all parenting responsibilities and the step parent assumes all legal and financial responsibility for the child. The most important issues to consider before an adoption petition can be filed with the court are the availability of consent from the non-custodial parent and the length of time the stepparent and biological parent have been married.

Grandparent Adoption: This type of adoption is one of several types of legal options that give grandparents all legal parental rights over a child. However, in order to establish a legal parental relationship with the child, the grandparents must bring a legal proceeding against the biological parents (one of their own children) that prove the biological parents to be unfit. These proceedings can be lengthy and emotionally difficult for everyone involved.