

Step-Parent Adoption – Time to Take the Plunge?

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Family composition often includes children from a prior marriage. Step-parents assume the role of caring for, loving, and raising the spouse's children. Lasting bonds are created by step-parent relationships but legally, step-parents have no rights with regards to these children. Step-parent adoption can be a great option for families to achieve permanency and stability. Some additional benefits include:

- Gaining a sense of belonging and importance in the family
- Securing a partnership in case the other parent dies
- Accessing medical, dental and other health care coverage from the step-parent
- Obtaining insurance benefits and other inheritance from the step-parent

Most of all, step-parent adoption provides a vehicle for blended families to achieve unity and a lasting legal bond. Upon adoption, a step-parent receives the same rights as biological parents. Step-parent adoption generally follows one of two paths. Either a biological parent consents to the adoption or a petition to terminate the biological parent's rights is filed. In Florida, step-parent adoption involves numerous forms, background checks, court appearances, and other legal appointments.

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