

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FLORIDA SUPREME COURT APPROVED FAMILY LAW FORM  
12.981(b)(1),  
JOINT PETITION FOR ADOPTION BY STEPPARENT

**When should this form be used?**

This form should be used when a stepparent is adopting his or her **spouse**'s child. Both the stepparent and his or her spouse must sign this **petition**. You must attach a certified copy of the court judgment terminating the parental rights of the other parent. You may not file this joint petition for adoption by stepparent until 30 days after the date the judge signed the judgment terminating the other parent's rights.

This form should be typed or printed in black ink. The name to be given to the child(ren) **after** the adoption should be used in the heading of the petition. The stepparent is the **petitioner**, because he or she is the one who is asking the court for legal action. After completing this form, you and your spouse must sign it before a **notary public** or **deputy clerk**. You should then **file** the original and 1 copy with the **clerk of the circuit court** in the county where the petition for termination of parental rights was granted, unless the court changes the venue to the county where the petitioner or the petitioners or the minor resides.

**What should I do next?**

For your case to proceed, you must **attach a certified copy of the court judgment terminating parental rights of the other parent. You may not file this joint petition for adoption by stepparent until 30 days after the order terminating the other parent's rights is final.**


When you have filed all of the required forms and met the requirements as outlined above, you are ready to set a **hearing** on your petition. You should check with the clerk of court, **family law intake staff** or the **judicial assistant** to set a **final hearing**.


**Where can I look for more information?**

**Before proceeding, you should read "General Information for Self-Represented Litigants" found at the beginning of these forms.** See chapter 63, Florida Statutes, and Florida Family Law Rule 12.200(a)(2) for further information.

**Special notes...**

With this petition you must file the following:


- **Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Act (UCCJA) Affidavit**,  Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(d).
- **Certified copy of the court judgment terminating parental rights.**

These family law forms contain a **Final Judgment of Stepparent Adoption**,  Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.981(b)(2), which the judge may use. You should check with the clerk, family law intake staff, or judicial assistant to see if you need to bring a final judgment form with you to the hearing. If so, you should type or print the heading, including the circuit, county case number, division, and the child(ren)'s names, and leave the rest blank for the judge to complete at your hearing.

You should decide how many **certified copies** of the final judgment you will need and be prepared to obtain them after the hearing. There is a charge for certified copies, and the clerk can tell you how much. The file

will be sealed after the final hearing, and then it will take an order from a judge to open the file and obtain a copy of the final judgment.

**AS AN ADOPTIVE STEPPARENT, YOU MAY BE LIABLE FOR CHILD SUPPORT IN THE EVENT OF A LATER DIVORCE AND COULD BE LIABLE IN LITIGATION FOR THE ACTIONS OF THE ADOPTEE(S). THIS ADOPTION MAY ALSO AFFECT THE ADOPTEE'S INHERITANCE.**

Remember, a person who is NOT an attorney is called a nonlawyer. If a nonlawyer helps you fill out these forms, that person must give you a copy of a **Disclosure from Nonlawyer**,  Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.900 (a), before he or she helps you. A nonlawyer helping you fill out these forms also **must** put his or her name, address, and telephone number on the bottom of the last page of every form he or she helps you complete.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE \_\_\_\_\_ JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,  
IN AND FOR \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Division: \_\_\_\_\_

IN RE: THE ADOPTION OF

\_\_\_\_\_,  
{use name to be given to child(ren)}  
Adoptee(s).

**JOINT PETITION FOR ADOPTION BY STEPPARENT**

Petitioner, {full legal name} \_\_\_\_\_, being sworn,  
joined by the above-named child(ren)'s ( ) mother ( ) father, {full legal name} \_\_\_\_\_,  
being sworn, files this joint petition for adoption of the above-named minor child(ren), under chapter 63,  
Florida Statutes.

1. This is an action for adoption of a minor child(ren) by his or her (their) stepparent.
2. I desire to adopt the following child(ren):

	<b>Name to be given to child(ren)</b>	<b>Birth date</b>	<b>Birthplace</b>
a.	_____	_____	_____
b.	_____	_____	_____
c.	_____	_____	_____
d.	_____	_____	_____
e.	_____	_____	_____
f.	_____	_____	_____

3. The child(ren) has (have) resided in my care and custody since {date} \_\_\_\_\_.  
I wish to adopt the child(ren) because I would like to legally establish the parent-child relationship  
already existing between the child(ren) and me. Since the above date, I have been able to provide  
adequately for the material needs of the child(ren) and am able to continue doing so in the future, as  
well as to provide for the child(ren)'s mental and emotional well-being. My facilities and resources  
are as described here:

- a. Facilities: {describe residence} \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Resources: {describe employment, income and other financial resources} \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old, and have resided at {street address}, \_\_\_\_\_  
{city} \_\_\_\_\_, {county} \_\_\_\_\_ {state} \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_ years.

5. I married the ( ) father or ( ) mother of the child(ren) on {date} \_\_\_\_\_, in {city} \_\_\_\_\_ {county} \_\_\_\_\_, {state} \_\_\_\_\_. The following are the dates and places of my divorces, if any:

**Date of Divorce**

**Place of Divorce**

a. \_\_\_\_\_  
b. \_\_\_\_\_

6. A completed **Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction Affidavit (UCCJA)**,  Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form 12.902(d), is filed with this petition.

7. A description and estimate of the value of any property of the adoptee is as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

8. The case style and date of entry of the judgment terminating parental rights of the other parent is: \_\_\_\_\_ . A certified copy of the court judgment terminating parental rights is attached.

WHEREFORE, I request that this Court enter a Final Judgment of Adoption of the Minor Child(ren) by Petitioner Stepparent and, as requested, change the name of the adoptee(s).

**I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this petition and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Stepparent

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_

NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary or  
deputy clerk.]

\_\_\_\_ Personally known

\_\_\_\_ Produced identification

Type of identification produced \_\_\_\_\_

**I understand that I am swearing or affirming under oath to the truthfulness of the claims made in this petition and that the punishment for knowingly making a false statement includes fines and/or imprisonment.**

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of ( ) mother ( ) father

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE OF FLORIDA

COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_

Sworn to or affirmed and signed before me on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
NOTARY PUBLIC or DEPUTY CLERK

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Print, type, or stamp commissioned name of notary or deputy clerk.]

\_\_\_\_ Personally known

\_\_\_\_ Produced identification

Type of identification produced \_\_\_\_\_

**IF A NONLAWYER HELPED YOU FILL OUT THIS FORM, HE/SHE MUST FILL IN THE BLANKS BELOW:** [ ✍ fill in **all** blanks]

I, {full legal name and trade name of nonlawyer} \_\_\_\_\_,

a nonlawyer, located at {street} \_\_\_\_\_, {city} \_\_\_\_\_,

{state} \_\_\_\_\_, {phone} \_\_\_\_\_, helped {name} \_\_\_\_\_,

who is the petitioner, fill out this form.