

We care about kids!

Ventura County Adoption Program



Definitions of Adoption Terms

366.26 Hearing (Permanent Plan Selection and Implementation):

The purpose of this hearing is to decide on a permanent plan for the child. At this hearing the court considers one of two permanent plan alternatives: adoption or legal guardianship. If the court cannot order one of these plans, the court will order long term foster care.

Adoptee

The person who is adopted

Adoption

Adoption is the process that transfers the legal rights, responsibilities and privileges of parenting. The rights and responsibilities of biological parents are permanently terminated and assumed by other individual(s) or married couple who become the child's legal parent(s). Adoptive parents have the same rights and responsibilities as biological parents.

Adoption Assistance Program (AAP)

The Adoption Assistance Program is a federal program that provides financial assistance for adopted children. The amount of Adoption Assistance benefit is based on the needs of the child at the time the Adoptive Placement Agreement is signed. All adopted children who were dependents of the court qualify for Adoption Assistance benefits.

Adoption Assistance Program Reassessment

Families receiving Adoption Assistance are reassessed every two years to determine if their current Adoption Assistance Program rate is appropriate for the child's needs. A reassessment is also completed when the adoptive family applies for an increase in Adoption Assistance benefits.

Adoption Home Study

The Adoption Home Study is a social investigation, study and preparation of a family who wishes to adopt. The written assessment produced by the social worker at the end of the adoption home study process is submitted to the supervising social worker for approval.

Adoptive Placement Agreement

The Adoptive Placement Agreement is a contract between Ventura County Children & Family Services and the prospective adoptive parent(s). It marks the official adoptive placement of the child in the home. Once signed, foster care payments stop and Adoption Assistance benefits can begin; however, the adoption is not yet finalized.

Birth Mother

The mother who gave birth to the adoptee

Birth Father

The alleged father and/or the legal father of the adoptee

Concurrent Planning

The provision of family reunification services (i.e., services dedicated to reunite foster children with their biological parents) and permanency planning services (i.e., services designated to facilitate foster children's movement into a permanent home) at the same time. Concurrent planning provides a "back up" plan if family reunification services fail.

Consent for Contact / Waiver of Confidentiality

These forms are signed by the birth parents or siblings and are kept permanently in the adoption case record in the event that the adoptee wants to contact the birth family when he/she is an adult. If there is no signed consent on file, Ventura County Children & Family Services cannot release any identifying information about the birth family.

Cooperative Adoption

An adoption that is conducted cooperatively between Ventura County Children & Family Services (CFS) and a private adoption agency. Typically, a private agency conducts the adoption home study while CFS monitors the well-being of the child.



COUNTY OF VENTURA

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Finalization Hearing

A court hearing at which time the adoption is finalized at the time the Order of Adoption is granted by the court

Foster Family Agency (FFA)

A foster family agency is a private agency that certifies foster parents and foster homes. When a family is certified by a foster family agency, a social worker from that agency visits the family's home on a regular basis. Some foster family agencies are also licensed adoption agencies. In this case a foster family agency social worker also conducts the adoption home study.

Independent Adoption

An independent adoption is an adoption that takes place outside the dependency court. Birth parents and prospective adoptive parents arrange the adoption on their own, sometimes with an attorney's help.

Legally Freed Child

A child whose birth parents have had their parental rights terminated or whose birth parents have voluntarily relinquished their parental rights

Legal Orphan

A child whose birth parents have had their parental rights terminated and who does not have an adoptive family

LIVE-SCAN

An electronic fingerprinting technology used to run criminal background checks through the state Department of Justice

Non-recurring Adoption Expenses Program

A state program that provides funds to cover some of the expenses related to the legal adoption of a child with special needs such as a home study, adoption fees, court costs, attorney fees, physical and psychological examinations and other expenses. In the United States, all children awaiting adoption in foster care are deemed special needs children, and therefore qualify for this program. Non-recurring adoption expenses may be reimbursed up to \$400 after the adoption is finalized.

Order of Adoption

The Order of Adoption or Adoption Decree is the official order handed down by the judge at the finalization hearing. It signifies that the adoption is final.

Petition for Adoption

A legal document filed in juvenile court to request an adoption finalization hearing

Permanency Planning Staffing

A joint meeting between Ventura County Children & Family Services adoption staff and child welfare staff to determine whether the permanent plan for a child is adoption, legal guardianship, or long term foster care. The meeting is held 60 days prior to the permanency hearing.

Private Adoption Agency

Any non-public agency licensed by the State to provide adoption services

Relinquishment

The action of a parent in which he or she surrenders custody, control and any responsibility for the care and support of the child

Termination of Parental Rights

The court-ordered severing of all legal rights and responsibilities of birth parents from their biological child



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