

Topic 1: Definition of Terms Used in Permanent Placement

Link to [Procedure](#)

“Adoption” means a legal and social process through which a child becomes a member of a family into which the child was not born. Adoption provides the child the same rights, privileges, and duties as a birth child.

“Adoption service” means a service directed towards children who are legally available for adoption, the birth family, the prospective adoptive family, and the adoptive family.

“Adoptive family” means an approved person or persons who:

- ◆ Have a child placed in their home and are being supervised before finalizing the adoption, or
- ◆ Have a child in their home who is legally adopted and entitled to the same benefits as a child born into the family.

“Adoptive home study” includes:

- ◆ An assessment of the family’s parental attributes.
- ◆ A written report stating approval or nonapproval of the family for adoptive placement of a child or children.

“Background report” or **“child study”** or **“social history”** means a written description of the child that includes:

- ◆ The child’s strengths and needs;
- ◆ The child’s medical, mental, social, educational, placement, and court histories;
- ◆ A description of the child’s relationships with the birth family, foster family, and significant others;
- ◆ A summary of the child’s understanding and feeling about adoption; and
- ◆ Recommendations as to the type of family that can best meet the child’s needs.

“Child” means:

- ◆ For guardianship subsidy, a person who has not attained the age of 18.
- ◆ For adoption subsidy, a person who has not attained the age of 18 or a person with a physical or mental disability who has not attained the age of 21.

“Consanguinity within the fourth degree” means a blood relationship by descent from a common ancestor. “Degrees” of consanguinity are defined as follows:

- ◆ First degree: sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, parents
- ◆ Second degree: grandsons, granddaughters, grandparents, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, and first cousins
- ◆ Third degree: great-grandsons, great-granddaughters, great-grandparents, great-nieces, great-nephews, great-aunts, great-uncles, first cousins once removed, and second cousins (children of people who are first cousins to each other)
- ◆ Fourth degree: great-great-grandsons, great-great-granddaughters, great-great-grandparents, great-grand nieces, great-grand nephews, great-grand-aunts, great-grand-uncles, first cousins twice removed, second cousins once removed, and third cousins (children of people who are second cousins to each other)

“Court-ordered studies” means home studies ordered by a judge for the purpose of determining custody of a child or placement of a child for the purpose of adoption.

“Department” means the Iowa Department of Human Services.

“Easy-to-place child” means a healthy child who does not meet one or more of the criteria of a child with special needs.

“Foster family adoption” means the adoption of a child by a licensed foster family who has cared for the child.

“Guardian” means a person who is not the parent of a child, but who has been appointed by a court or juvenile court having jurisdiction over the child to:

- ◆ Have a permanent self-sustaining relationship with the child, and
- ◆ Make important decisions that have a permanent effect on the life and development of that child and to promote the general welfare of that child.

Unless otherwise enlarged or circumscribed by a court having jurisdiction over the child or by operation of law, the right and duties of a guardian with respect to a child are as follows:

- ◆ To consent to marriage, enlistment in the armed forces of the United States, or medical, psychiatric, or surgical treatment.
- ◆ To serve as guardian ad litem, unless the interests of the guardian conflict with the interests of the child or unless another person has been appointed guardian ad litem.
- ◆ To serve as custodian, unless another person has been appointed custodian.

- ◆ To make periodic visitations if the guardian does not have physical possession or custody of the child.
- ◆ To consent to adoption and to make any other decision that the parents could have made when the parent-child relationship existed.
- ◆ To make other decisions involving protection, education, and care and control of the child.
- ◆ Make an annual report to the court. (See form [470-3355](#), *Adoption Report to the Court*, for an example of a potential format.)

“Guardianship record” means a case record regarding a child, established and retained by the Department, when the Department is named guardian of the child by court order. The purpose of the guardianship record is to collect and maintain information about the child and the birth family, legal documents, and other information that will assist in fulfilling the responsibility of guardian.

“Guardianship subsidy” means a monthly payment to assist in covering the cost of room, board, clothing, and spending money for the child.

“Life book” means a compilation of information about the child to assist the child in dealing with separation and loss issues. The life book shall provide background and genealogical data which includes:

- ◆ Birth information and photographs of the child.
- ◆ Placement history, including:
 - Dates of placement.
 - Names of caretakers.
 - Reasons for leaving the placement.
 - Relationships.
- ◆ School reports.
- ◆ Social, medical, and mental health developmental history.
- ◆ Awards received.
- ◆ Important events and letters from significant persons.
- ◆ Other information that the child wishes to include.

“Placement services” include the activities and travel necessary to place the child in the adoptive family.

“Postadoption services” include those services that an adoptive family may access after the adoption is finalized to assist the family in coping with and resolving problems within the family. These services may be obtained through Iowa KidsNet, community resources, the Department, or support groups.

“Postplacement services” include the supervision, support, and intervention necessary before finalization to assist in maintaining the adoptive placement.

“Preadoptive family” means an adoptive family with a child placed in the home whose adoption has not been finalized.

“Preparation of child” includes activities necessary to ready the child for placement into an adoptive family.

“Preparation of family” includes the activities necessary to assist the family in adding an adoptive child as a new member of their family.

“Preplacement visits” means contacts, activities, and visits between the child and adoptive family before the adoptive placement.

“Procedendo” means an order issued by the supreme court returning jurisdiction to the district court after a final appellate decision regarding an appeal.

“PS-MAPP” (Partnering for Safety and Permanence Model Approach to Partnership in Parenting) is the approved foster/adoptive parent preservice preparation, selection, and training curriculum.

“Recruitment” includes activities designed to identify individuals or families who may be prospective adoptive families for a special needs child or children.

“Release of custody services” includes providing information regarding options to assist parents in making permanent plans for their child and counseling regarding the resulting personal and emotional issues of the child.

“Screening” includes an initial contact and interview with an individual or family to determine if the individual or family wishes to adopt a special needs child or children and whether or not to proceed with a preplacement assessment and adoptive home study.

“Selection of family” means reviewing approved home studies to match a family’s strengths with a specific child’s needs.

“Sibling group” for the purposes of the guardianship subsidy program, means at least two children, including adopted children, who are whole or half siblings with a common parent. Stepsiblings are not included as part of the sibling group.

“Special needs” means that the child meets one or more of the following criteria:

- ◆ The child has a medically diagnosed disability which:
 - Substantially limits one or more major life activities.
 - Requires professional treatment, assistance in self-care, or the purchase of special equipment.
- ◆ The child has been determined to be mentally retarded by a qualified mental retardation professional.
- ◆ The child is at high risk of:
 - Having mental retardation, as determined by a qualified mental retardation professional.
 - Having an emotional disability, as determined by a qualified mental health professional.
 - Having a physical disability, as determined by a physician.

NOTE: Until a determination has been made that the child has mental retardation, an emotional disability, or a physical disability, only a special services subsidy can be provided.

- ◆ The child has been diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional to have a psychiatric condition which impairs the child’s mental, intellectual, or social functioning, and for which the child requires professional services.
- ◆ The child has been diagnosed by a qualified mental health professional to have a behavioral or emotional disorder characterized by situationally inappropriate behavior which:
 - Deviates substantially from behavior appropriate to the child’s age.
 - Interferes significantly with the child’s intellectual, social, and personal adjustment.
- ◆ The child is age eight or over and Caucasian.
- ◆ The child aged two or older is a member of a minority race or ethnic group, or the child’s biological parents are of different races.
- ◆ The child is a member of a sibling group of three or more who are placed in the same adoptive home.