

Several legal proceedings must be completed before a child may be adopted. Usually the first step is that each parent who has a legal responsibility for and right to the child must have those rights terminated by a judge. After all parents have had their rights terminated and all contested terminations have been upheld by the court, the judge can then declare the child “Legally Free” for adoption. However, sometime parents voluntarily relinquish their rights, which shortens the time before the judge can declare the child “Legally Free.” Once the child is “Legally Free,” the child’s adoption by new parents can be finalized.

