



OFFICE OF THE STAFF JUDGE ADVOCATE  
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION (AIR ASSAULT) AND FORT CAMPBELL  
CLIENT SERVICES  
(270) 798-4432

## STEP-PARENT ADOPTION ASSISTANCE

There are various types of adoptions available to a couple seeking to expand their family. All forms of adoption should be done under the guidance of an attorney and the appropriate government agencies.

Related persons may adopt related children. The most common of this type of adoption is a step-parent adoption, in which a parent's new spouse adopts a child from a previous partner. The Client Services Office can assist eligible persons with this type of adoption.

**Adoption with Consent of Biological Parent.** If the non-custodial biological parent consents to the adoption, you may be eligible for assistance from the Client Services Office. You must have a valid mailing address for the non-custodial parent. Once the adoption is complete, the parental rights and support obligations of the non-custodial biological parent terminate forever.

**Divorce of Parent and Adoptive Parent Does Not Terminate Adoption.** Upon adoption, the adopting parent becomes legal parent of record. Once completed, an adoption generally cannot be undone. Adoption is a permanent legal responsibility to a child. An adoption of a stepchild does not terminate based on divorce of the parents.

**Child Support for an Adopted Child.** An adopting parent is responsible for the welfare of the adopted child just as a biological parent. Thus, child support could be due to an adopted child if the adopting parent and the biological parent end their relationship.

**Military Attorneys Cannot Represent You in Civilian Court.** Adoption is a legally binding act and should not be entered into without great thought and consideration. If married couples decide to go forward with a step-parent adoption, they need to seek guidance from an attorney. While military attorneys cannot represent an individual in civilian court, the attorney can assist in the preparation of the necessary documents for this type of adoption. Generally the couple can then file for a step-parent adoption on their own. Should a couple need legal representation for the adoption process, the Client Services Office can provide a list of local civilian attorneys who practice adoption law.

**Reimbursement of Qualifying Expenses to Soldiers.** The majority of active duty Soldiers may be reimbursed for qualifying expenses for the adoption of a child. See a legal assistance attorney for more information on the Department of Defense's Adoption Reimbursement program or visit <http://www.dfas.mil/militarymembers/payentitlements/adoptionreimbursement.html>.

**More Information.** You may request further guidance at the Fort Campbell Client Services Office, Building 2765 Tennessee Avenue, at 29<sup>th</sup> Street, (270) 798-4432.