



ADOPTION

Before a child can be adopted, a hearing called termination of parental rights (TPR) must be held.

The judge may consider terminating parents' rights if returning the child to the family home is contrary to the child's health, safety, or welfare, and that returning the child home cannot be accomplished in a reasonable period of time.

TPR ends all of a parent's legal rights to his or her child, and the child can be adopted. If a parent loses his or her rights, relatives no longer have legal rights regarding the child, but may still be able to adopt the child if the judge determines it is in the child's best interest.

LEGAL GUARDIAN

If the court grants legal guardianship, this is a legal and permanent connection for the child. It is not as permanent as adoption, but no further court hearings are required. For a legal guardianship supported by a subsidy, DCFS will conduct an annual review of the family's and child's circumstances and an annual report to the court must be filed.

PERMANENT CUSTODY

If the court gives you permanent custody, no further services or periodic reviews are required. The case will be closed and the family will not be eligible to receive support from DCFS. This is different from legal guardianship because DCFS does not file an annual report with the court.