

**CASE PROGRESSION CHECKLIST**  
**JOINT PETITION FOR STEPPARENT ADOPTION**  
**(WITH CONSENT OR NOTICE BY PERSONAL SERVICE)**

This checklist has been prepared to assist you with the necessary procedure for bringing your case to final hearing. This checklist lists the minimum requirements and, even though fairly specific, may not be all-inclusive for every case. **It is not intended, and should not be substituted for proper legal advice from an attorney.** You should, however, find that making sure all necessary steps noted below are followed would reduce procedural difficulties and time delays.

**I. INITIAL FILING**

**A. Required forms**

\_\_\_\_\_ Joint Petition for Adoption by Stepparent - Form 12.981(b)(1).

\_\_\_\_\_ Civil Cover Sheet (local requirement)

\_\_\_\_\_ Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Affidavit (UCCJEA) - Form 12.902(d)

\_\_\_\_\_ Notice of Related Cases - Form 12.900(h)

\_\_\_\_\_ Affidavit of Nonpaternity - Form 12.981(a)(3)

\_\_\_\_\_ Stepparent Adoption: Consent and Waiver by Parent - Form 12.981(a)(1)

-OR-

\_\_\_\_\_ Summons: Personal Service on an Individual - Form 12.910(a)

AND

\_\_\_\_\_ Process Service Memorandum - Form 12.910(b)

(If the other parent is Deceased, you will need to obtain a certified copy of the death certificate)

\_\_\_\_\_ Stepparent Adoption: Consent of Adoptee - Form 12.981(a)(2), when the minor child is over 12 years of age

\_\_\_\_\_ Indian Child Welfare Affidavit Act - Form 12.981(a)(5)

\_\_\_\_\_ Motion for Search of the Putative Father Registry - Form 12.981(a)(6)

AND

\_\_\_\_\_ Order Granting Motion for Search of the Putative Father Registry - Form 12.981(a)(7)

**B. Required Fees**

\_\_\_\_\_ Filing fee Paid or fee waiver granted by Court.

\_\_\_\_\_ Fees for process service paid directly to a Process Server. The cost for service is set by the process server, the filing party must obtain service procedures including fees from the process server. A complete list of Pinellas County process servers can be obtained online at [www.mypinellsclerk.org](http://www.mypinellsclerk.org) (If waiver not signed)

## II. SERVICE OF PROCESS

### A. Personal Service (If other parent signed a Consent, skip to Section III)

\_\_\_\_\_ Summons returned “served” and filed by Clerk – Form 12.910(a).

\_\_\_\_\_ After 20 days have passed from the day Other Parent was served, check to see whether Other Parent filed an answer or **any** paper within the 20 day period. If yes, you may check this item.

**(If both checked, skip to Section III)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Summons returned “not served” and filed by Clerk – Form 12.910(a).

\_\_\_\_\_ Request clerk issue an alias summons, if address is known.

**(If proper service is not obtained, the court cannot hear your case.)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Constructive service also known as “service by publication.” This can be used only if you do not know where the other party is. This can be a very complicated area of the law.

\_\_\_\_\_ Affidavit of Diligent Search and Inquiry – Form 12.913(b).

\_\_\_\_\_ Affidavit of Diligent Search – Form 12.913(c).

\_\_\_\_\_ Notice of Action for Termination of Parental Rights and Stepparent Adoption – Form 12.913(a)(3).

**If constructive service is used, other than granting a dissolution, the court may grant only limited relief. In all cases it is best to have your petition personally served. If proper service is not obtained the court cannot hear your case. This is a complicated area of the law and you may wish to consult with an attorney before using constructive service.**

Only now is the case potentially ready for setting for trial/final hearing.

## III. SETTING A HEARING

After all paperwork is received by the Clerk's office, the case will be reviewed by the Court's Staff Attorney for accuracy. You will receive correspondence from the Court notifying you of your hearing date or additional items that are required to receive a hearing date.

If thirty (30) days have passed from the date your case was filed and you have not received correspondence from the Court then you may do the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Call Family Law at (727)582-7200 to request final hearing. Your court records will be checked for completeness and you will either be given a court calendar date or you will be given further instructions for setting your final hearing.

If you do not properly complete this step, your hearing could be delayed.

Please make arrangements for child care if applicable. Children are not allowed to attend without prior Order, per Fla.Fam.L.R.P. 12.407.