

600A.8 Grounds for termination.

The juvenile court shall base its findings and order under section 600A.9 on clear and convincing proof. The following shall be, either separately or jointly, grounds for ordering termination of parental rights:

1. A parent has signed a release of custody pursuant to section 600A.4 and the release has not been revoked.

2. A parent has petitioned for the parent's termination of parental rights pursuant to section 600A.5.

3. The parent has abandoned the child. For the purposes of this subsection, a parent is deemed to have abandoned a child as follows:

a. (1) If the child is less than six months of age when the termination hearing is held, a parent is deemed to have abandoned the child unless the parent does all of the following:

(a) Demonstrates a willingness to assume custody of the child rather than merely objecting to the termination of parental rights.

(b) Takes prompt action to establish a parental relationship with the child.

(c) Demonstrates, through actions, a commitment to the child.

(2) In determining whether the requirements of this paragraph are met, the court may consider all of the following:

(a) The fitness and ability of the parent in personally assuming custody of the child, including a personal and financial commitment which is timely demonstrated.

(b) Whether efforts made by the parent in personally assuming custody of the child are substantial enough to evince a settled purpose to personally assume all parental duties.

(c) With regard to a putative father, whether the putative father publicly acknowledged paternity or held himself out to be the father of the child during the six continuing months immediately prior to the termination proceeding.

(d) With regard to a putative father, whether the putative father paid a fair and reasonable sum, in accordance with the putative father's means, for medical, hospital, and nursing expenses incurred in connection with the mother's pregnancy or with the birth of the child, or whether the putative father demonstrated emotional support as evidenced by the putative father's conduct toward the mother.

(e) Any measures taken by the parent to establish legal responsibility for the child.

(f) Any other factors evincing a commitment to the child.

b. If the child is six months of age or older when the termination hearing is held, a parent is deemed to have abandoned the child unless the parent maintains substantial and continuous or repeated contact with the child as demonstrated by contribution toward support of the child of a reasonable amount, according to the parent's means, and as demonstrated by any of the following:

(1) Visiting the child at least monthly when physically and financially able to do so and when not prevented from doing so by the person having lawful custody of the child.

(2) Regular communication with the child or with the person having the care or custody of the child, when physically and financially unable to visit the child or when prevented from visiting the child by the person having lawful custody of the child.

(3) Openly living with the child for a period of six months within the one-year period immediately preceding the termination of parental rights hearing and during that period openly holding himself or herself out to be the parent of the child.

c. The subjective intent of the parent, whether expressed or otherwise, unsupported by evidence of acts specified in paragraph "a" or "b" manifesting such intent, does not preclude a determination that the parent has abandoned the child. In making a determination, the court shall not require a showing of diligent efforts by any person to encourage the parent to perform the acts specified in paragraph "a" or "b". In making a determination regarding a putative father, the court may consider the conduct of the putative father toward the child's mother during the pregnancy. Demonstration of a commitment to the child is not met by the putative father marrying the mother of the child after adoption of the child.

4. A parent has been ordered to contribute to the support of the child or financially aid in the child's birth and has failed to do so without good cause.

5. A parent does not object to the termination after having been given proper notice and the opportunity to object.

6. A parent does not object to the termination although every reasonable effort has been made to identify, locate and give notice to that parent as required in section 600A.6.

7. An adoptive parent requests termination of parental rights and the parent-child relationship based upon a showing that the adoption was fraudulently induced in accordance with the procedures set out in section 600A.9, subsection 3.

8. Both of the following circumstances apply to a parent:

a. The parent has been determined to be a chronic substance abuser as defined in section 125.2 and the parent has committed a second or subsequent domestic abuse assault pursuant to section 708.2A.

b. The parent has abducted the child, has improperly removed the child from the physical custody of the person entitled to custody without the consent of that person, or has improperly retained the child after a visit or other temporary relinquishment of physical custody.

9. The parent has been imprisoned for a crime against the child, the child's sibling, or another child in the household, or the parent has been imprisoned and it is unlikely that the parent will be released from prison for a period of five or more years.

10. The parent has been convicted of a felony offense that is a sex offense against a minor as defined in section 692A.101, the parent is divorced from or was never married to the minor's other parent, and the parent is serving a minimum sentence of confinement of at least five years for that offense.

[C66, 71, 73, 75, §232.41; C77, 79, 81, §600A.8]

92 Acts, ch 1192, §2, 5; 95 Acts, ch 182, §26; 97 Acts, ch 161, §2; 97 Acts, ch 209, §27, 30; 2004 Acts, ch 1010, §1, 2; 2005 Acts, ch 69, §55; 2006 Acts, ch 1182, §63; 2009 Acts, ch 119, §43