

CHAPTER 600

ADOPTION

Referred to in §232.6, 232.166, 232B.3, 422.9, 514C.10, 602.8102(86), 602.8105, 815.11

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600.1 Construction.

This chapter* shall be construed liberally. The best interest of the person to be adopted shall be the paramount consideration in interpreting this chapter. However, the interests of the adopting parents shall be given due consideration in this interpretation. However, in determining the best interest of the person to be adopted and the interests of the adopting parents, any evidence of interests relating to a period of time during which the person to be adopted is placed with prospective adoptive parents and during which the placement is not in compliance with the law, adoption procedures, or any action by the juvenile court or court, shall not be considered in the determination.

If a proceeding held under this chapter involves an Indian child as defined in section 232B.3 and the proceeding is subject to the Iowa Indian child welfare Act under chapter 232B, the proceeding and other actions taken in connection with the proceeding or this chapter shall comply with chapter 232B. In any proceeding held or action taken under this chapter involving an Indian child, the applicable requirements of the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1999, Pub. L. No. 105-89, shall be applied to the proceeding or action in a manner that complies with chapter 232B and the federal Indian Child Welfare Act, Pub. L. No. 95-608.

[C77, 79, 81, §600.1]

94 Acts, ch 1174, §6, 22; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §2; 2003 Acts, ch 153, §16

[P] *Enacted as sections 600.1 – 600.16, Code 1977

600.2 Definitions.

1. “Child”, “parent”, “parent-child relationship”, “termination of parental rights”, “biological parent”, “stepparent”, “guardian”, “custodian”, “guardian ad litem”, “minor”, “adult”, “agency”, “department”, “court”, “juvenile court”, “independent placement” mean the same as defined in section 600A.2.

2. “Investigator” means a natural person who is certified or approved by the department

of human services, after inspection by the department of inspections and appeals, as being capable of conducting an investigation under section 600.8.

[C77, 79, 81, §600.2]

90 Acts, ch 1204, §64; 94 Acts, ch 1046, §12

Referred to in §600A.4

600.3 Commencement of adoption action — jurisdiction — forum non conveniens.

1. An action for the adoption of any natural person shall be commenced by the filing of an adoption petition, as prescribed in section 600.5, in the juvenile court or court of the county in which an adult person to be adopted is domiciled or resides, or in the juvenile court or court of the county in which the guardian of a minor person to be adopted or the petitioner is domiciled or resides.

2. a. An adoption petition shall not be filed until a termination of parental rights has been accomplished except in the following cases:

(1) No termination of parental rights is required if the person to be adopted is an adult.

(2) If the stepparent of the child to be adopted is the adoption petitioner, the parent-child relationship between the child and the parent who is not the spouse of the petitioner may be terminated as part of the adoption proceeding by the filing of that parent's consent to the adoption.

(3) A termination of parental rights order is not required prior to the filing of an adoption petition if the adoption is a standby adoption as defined in section 600.14A.

b. For the purposes of this subsection, a consent to adopt recognized by the juvenile courts or courts of another jurisdiction in the United States and obtained from a resident of that jurisdiction shall be accepted in this state in lieu of a termination of parental rights proceeding.

c. Any adoption proceeding pending on or completed prior to July 1, 1978, is hereby legalized and validated to the extent that it is consistent with this subsection.

3. If upon filing of the adoption petition or at any later time in the adoption action the juvenile court or court finds that in the interest of substantial justice the adoption action should be conducted in another juvenile court or court, it may transfer, stay, or dismiss the adoption action on any conditions that are just.

4. An adoption petition shall be limited to the adoption of one natural person.

[R60, §2600; C73, §2307; C97, §3250; C24, §10496; C27, 31, 35, §10501-b1; C39, §10501.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.1; C77, 79, 81, §600.3]

2000 Acts, ch 1145, §3; 2001 Acts, ch 57, §2; 2007 Acts, ch 71, §1

Referred to in §600.4, 600.5, 600.12A, 602.8105

600.4 Qualifications to file adoption petition.

Any person who may adopt may file an adoption petition under section 600.3. The following persons may adopt:

1. An unmarried adult.

2. Husband and wife together.

3. A husband or wife separately if the person to be adopted is not the other spouse and if the adopting spouse:

a. Is the stepparent of the person to be adopted;

b. Has been separated from the other spouse by reason of the other spouse's abandonment as prescribed in section 597.10; or

c. Is unable to petition with the other spouse because of the prolonged and unexplained absence, unavailability, or incapacity of the other spouse, or because of an unreasonable withholding of joinder by the other spouse, as determined by the juvenile court or court under section 600.5, subsection 7.

[R60, §2600; C73, §2307; C97, §3250; C24, §10496; C27, 31, 35, §10501-b1; C39, §10501.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.1; C77, 79, 81, §600.4]

2000 Acts, ch 1145, §4

Referred to in §600.5, 600.14A

600.5 Contents of an adoption petition.

An adoption petition shall be signed and verified by the petitioner, shall be filed with the juvenile court or court designated in section 600.3, and shall state:

1. The name, as it appears on the birth certificate or in a verified birth record or as it appears as a result of marriage, and the residence or domicile of the person to be adopted.
2. The date and place of birth of the person to be adopted.
3. Any new name requested to be given the person to be adopted.
4. The name, residence, and domicile of any guardian or custodian of the person to be adopted and the name, residence, and domicile of that person's guardian ad litem if one is appointed for the adoption proceedings.
5. The name, residence, and domicile of the petitioner, if this is not required to be stated under subsection 4 of this section, and the date or expected date on which the person to be adopted, if a minor, began or will begin living with the petitioner.
6. The name, residence, and domicile of any parent of the person to be adopted.
7. A designation of the particular provision in section 600.4 under which the petitioner is qualified to adopt and, if under section 600.4, subsection 3, paragraph "c", a request that the juvenile court or court approve the petitioner's qualification to adopt.
8. Any name by which the petitioner is known or has been known.
9. The existence of any criminal conviction or deferred judgment for an offense other than a simple misdemeanor under a law of any state against the petitioner, and the existence of any founded child abuse report in which the petitioner is named.
10. A description and estimate of the value of any property owned by or held for the person to be adopted.
11. A description of the facilities and resources, including those provided under a subsidy agreement pursuant to sections 600.17 to 600.22, that the petitioner is willing and able to supply for the nurture and care of any minor person to be adopted.
12. When and where termination of parental rights pertaining to the person to be adopted has occurred, if termination was required under section 600.3.

[R60, §2600; C73, §2307; C97, §3250; C24, §10496; C27, 31, 35, §10501-b1; C39, §10501.1; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.1; C77, 79, 81, §600.5]

2000 Acts, ch 1145, §5, 6; 2006 Acts, ch 1029, §1

Referred to in §600.3, 600.4, 600.8

600.6 Attachments to an adoption petition.

An adoption petition shall have attached to it the following:

1. A certified copy of the birth certificate showing parentage of the person to be adopted or, if such certificate is not available, a verified birth record.
2. A copy of any order terminating parental rights with respect to the person to be adopted.
3. Any written consent and verified statement required under section 600.7, except the consent required under subsection 1, paragraph "d", of that section.
4. Any preplacement investigation report that has been prepared at the time of filing pursuant to section 600.8.
5. In the case of a standby adoption as defined in section 600.14A, a form completed by the terminally ill parent consenting to termination of parental rights and adoption of the child by a person or persons specified in the consent form, effective at a future date when the terminally ill parent of the child has died or requests that a final adoption decree be issued.

[R60, §2601; C73, §2308; C97, §3251; C24, §10497; C27, 31, 35, §10501-b3; C39, §10501.3; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.3; C77, 79, 81, §600.6]

89 Acts, ch 148, §1; 99 Acts, ch 43, §1; 2001 Acts, ch 57, §3

Referred to in §600.14A

600.7 Consents to the adoption.

1. An adoption petition shall not be granted unless the following persons consent to the adoption or unless the juvenile court or court makes a determination under subsection 4:
 - a. Any guardian of the person to be adopted.
 - b. The spouse of a petitioner who is a stepparent.

- c. The spouse of a petitioner who is separately petitioning to adopt an adult person.
 - d. The person to be adopted if that person is fourteen years of age or older.
2. A consent to the adoption shall be in writing, shall name the person to be adopted and the petitioner, shall be signed by the person consenting, and shall be made in the following manner:
- a. If by any minor person to be adopted who is fourteen years of age or older, in the presence of the juvenile court or court in which the adoption petition is filed.
 - b. If by any other person, either in the presence of the juvenile court or court in which the adoption petition is filed or before a notary public as provided in chapter 9B.
3. A consent to the adoption may be withdrawn prior to the issuance of an adoption decree under section 600.13 by the filing of an affidavit of consent withdrawal with the juvenile court or court. Such affidavit shall be treated in the same manner as an attached verified statement is treated under subsection 4.
4. If any person required to consent under this section refuses to or cannot be located to give consent, the petitioner may attach to the petition a verified statement of such refusal or lack of location. The juvenile court or court shall then determine, at the adoption hearing prescribed in section 600.12, whether, in the best interests of the person to be adopted and the petitioner, any particular consent shall be unnecessary to the granting of an adoption petition.
- [R60, §2600, 2601; C73, §2307, 2308; C97, §3250, 3251; C24, §10496, 10497; C27, 31, 35, §10501-b1, 10501-b3; C39, §10501.1, 10501.3; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.1, 600.3; C77, 79, 81, §600.7]

2000 Acts, ch 1145, §7 – 9; 2012 Acts, ch 1050, §53, 60

Referred to in §600.6, 600.11, 600.14A

[T] 2012 amendment to subsection 2, paragraph b, takes effect January 1, 2013; 2012 Acts, ch 1050, §60

[T] Subsection 2, paragraph b amended

600.7A Adoption services provided by or through department of human services — selection of adoptive parent criteria.

The department of human services shall adopt rules which provide that if adoption services are provided by or through the department, notwithstanding any other selection of adoptive parent criteria, the overriding criterion shall be a preference for placing a child in a stable home environment as expeditiously as possible.

96 Acts, ch 1174, §7

Referred to in §600.14A

600.8 Placement investigations and reports.

1. a. A preplacement investigation shall be directed to and a report of this investigation shall answer the following:

(1) Whether the home of the prospective adoption petitioner is a suitable one for the placement of a minor person to be adopted.

(2) How the prospective adoption petitioner's emotional maturity, finances, health, relationships, and any other relevant factor may affect the petitioner's ability to accept, care, and provide a minor person to be adopted with an adequate environment as that person matures.

(3) Whether the prospective adoption petitioner has been convicted of a crime under a law of any state or has a record of founded child abuse.

b. A postplacement investigation and a report of this investigation shall:

(1) Verify the allegations of the adoption petition and its attachments and of the report of expenditures required under section 600.9.

(2) Evaluate the progress of the placement of the minor person to be adopted.

(3) Determine whether adoption by the adoption petitioner may be in the best interests of the minor person to be adopted.

c. A background information investigation and a report of the investigation shall be made by the agency, the person making an independent placement, or an investigator. The background information investigation and report shall not disclose the identity of the biological parents of the minor person to be adopted. The report shall be completed and filed with the court prior to the holding of the adoption hearing prescribed in section 600.12. The

report shall be in substantial conformance with the prescribed medical and social history forms designed by the department pursuant to section 600A.4, subsection 2, paragraph “f”. A copy of the background information investigation report shall be furnished to the adoption petitioners within thirty days after the filing of the adoption petition. Any person, including a juvenile court, who has gained relevant background information concerning a minor person subject to an adoption petition shall, upon request, fully cooperate with the conducting of a background information investigation by disclosing any relevant background information, whether contained in sealed records or not.

2. a. A preplacement investigation and report of the investigation shall be completed and the prospective adoption petitioner approved for a placement by the person making the investigation prior to any agency or independent placement of a minor person in the petitioner’s home in anticipation of an ensuing adoption. A report of a preplacement investigation that has approved a prospective adoption petitioner for a placement shall not authorize placement of a minor person with that petitioner after one year from the date of the report’s issuance. However, if the prospective adoption petitioner is a relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity who has assumed custody of a minor person to be adopted, a preplacement investigation of this petitioner and a report of the investigation may be completed at a time established by the juvenile court or court or may be waived as provided in subsection 12.

b. (1) The person making the investigation shall not approve a prospective adoption petitioner pursuant to subsection 1, paragraph “a”, subparagraph (3), and an evaluation shall not be performed under subparagraph (2), if the petitioner has been convicted of any of the following felony offenses:

- (a) Within the five-year period preceding the petition date, a drug-related offense.
- (b) Child endangerment or neglect or abandonment of a dependent person.
- (c) Domestic abuse.
- (d) A crime against a child, including but not limited to sexual exploitation of a minor.
- (e) A forcible felony.

(2) The person making the investigation shall not approve a prospective adoption petitioner pursuant to subsection 1, paragraph “a”, subparagraph (3), unless an evaluation has been made which considers the nature and seriousness of the crime or founded abuse in relation to the adoption, the time elapsed since the commission of the crime or founded abuse, the circumstances under which the crime or founded abuse was committed, the degree of rehabilitation, and the number of crimes or founded abuse committed by the person involved.

c. If the person making the investigation does not approve a prospective adoption petitioner under paragraph “a” of this subsection, the person investigated may appeal the disapproval as a contested case to the director of human services. Judicial review of any adverse decision by the director may be sought pursuant to chapter 17A.

3. The department, an agency or an investigator shall conduct all investigations and reports required under subsection 2 of this section.

4. A postplacement investigation and the report of the investigation shall be completed and filed with the juvenile court or court prior to the holding of the adoption hearing prescribed in section 600.12. Upon the filing of an adoption petition pursuant to section 600.5, the juvenile court or court shall immediately appoint the department, an agency, or an investigator to conduct and complete the postplacement report. Any person who has gained relevant background information concerning a minor person subject to an adoption petition shall, upon request, fully cooperate with the conducting of the postplacement investigation by disclosing any relevant information requested, whether contained in sealed records or not.

5. Any person conducting an investigation under subsection 1, paragraph “c”, subsection 3, or subsection 4, may, in the investigation or subsequent report, include, utilize, or rely upon any reports, studies, or examinations to the extent they are relevant.

6. Any person conducting an investigation under subsection 1, paragraph “c”, subsection 3, or subsection 4, may charge a fee which does not exceed the reasonable cost of the services rendered and which is based on a sliding scale schedule relating to the investigated person’s ability to pay.

7. Any investigation or report required under this section shall not apply when the person to be adopted is an adult or when the prospective adoption petitioner or adoption petitioner is a stepparent of the person to be adopted. However, in the case of a stepparent adoption, the juvenile court or court, upon the request of an interested person or on its own motion stating the reasons therefor of record, may order an investigation or report pursuant to this section. Additionally, if an adoption petitioner discloses a criminal conviction or deferred judgment for an offense other than a simple misdemeanor or founded child abuse report pursuant to section 600.5, the petitioner shall notify the court of the inclusion of this information in the petition prior to the final adoption hearing, and the court shall make a specific ruling regarding whether to waive any investigation or report required under subsection 1.

8. Any person designated to make an investigation and report under this section may request an agency or state agency, within or outside this state, to conduct a portion of the investigation or the report, as may be appropriate, and to file a supplemental report of such investigation or report with the juvenile court or court. In the case of the adoption of a minor person by a person domiciled or residing in any other jurisdiction of the United States, any investigation or report required under this section which has been conducted pursuant to the standards of that other jurisdiction shall be recognized in this state.

9. The department may investigate, on its own initiative or on order of the juvenile court, any placement made or adoption petition filed under this chapter or chapter 600A and may report its resulting recommendation to the juvenile court.

10. The department or an agency or investigator may conduct any investigations required for an interstate or interagency placement. Any interstate investigations or placements shall follow the procedures and regulations under the interstate compact on the placement of children. Such investigations and placements shall be in compliance with the laws of the states involved.

11. Any person who assists in or impedes the placement or adoption of a minor person in violation of the provisions of this section shall be, upon conviction, guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

12. Any investigation and report required under subsection 1 may be waived by the juvenile court or court if the adoption petitioner is related within the fourth degree of consanguinity to the person to be adopted. However, if an adoption petitioner discloses a criminal conviction or deferred judgment for an offense other than a simple misdemeanor or founded child abuse report pursuant to section 600.5, the petitioner shall notify the court of the inclusion of this information in the petition prior to the final adoption hearing, and the court shall make a specific ruling regarding whether to waive any investigation or report required under subsection 1.

[C27, 31, 35, §10501-b2; C39, §10501.2; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.2; C77, 79, 81, §600.8]

83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159; 87 Acts, ch 153, §18, 19; 88 Acts, ch 1134, §101; 94 Acts, ch 1046, §13; 98 Acts, ch 1190, §30; 99 Acts, ch 138, §1, 2; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §10, 11; 2001 Acts, ch 24, §67, 68, 74; 2006 Acts, ch 1029, §2, 3; 2011 Acts, ch 98, §5

Referred to in §600.2, 600.6, 600.11, 600.12A, 600.14A, 600.16

600.9 Report of expenditures.

1. a. A biological parent shall not receive any thing of value as a result of the biological parent's child or former child being placed with and adopted by another person, unless that thing of value is an allowable expense under subsection 2.

b. Any person assisting in any way with the placement or adoption of a minor person shall not charge a fee which is more than usual, necessary, and commensurate with the services rendered.

c. If the biological parent receives any prohibited thing of value, if a person gives a prohibited thing of value, or if a person charges a prohibited fee under this subsection, the person is guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

2. An adoption petitioner of a minor person shall file with the juvenile court or court, prior to the adoption hearing, a full accounting of all disbursements of any thing of value paid or agreed to be paid by or on behalf of the petitioner in connection with the petitioned

adoption. This accounting shall be made by a report prescribed by the juvenile court or court and shall be signed and verified by the petitioner. Only expenses incurred in connection with the following and any other expenses approved by the juvenile court or court are allowable:

- a. The birth of the minor person to be adopted.
- b. Placement of the minor person with the adoption petitioner and legal expenses related to the termination of parental rights and adoption processes.
- c. Pregnancy-related medical care received by the biological parents or the minor person during the pregnancy or delivery of the minor person and for medically necessary postpartum care for the biological parent and the minor person.
- d. Living expenses of the mother, permitted in an amount not to exceed the cost of room and board or rent and food, and transportation, for medical purposes only, on a common carrier of persons or an ambulance, for no longer than thirty days after the birth of the minor person.
- e. Costs of the counseling provided to the biological parents prior to the birth of the child, prior to the release of custody, and any counseling provided to the biological parents for not more than sixty days after the birth of the child.
- f. Living expenses of the minor person if the minor person is placed in foster care during the pendency of the termination of parental rights proceedings.

All payments for allowable expenses shall be made to the provider, if applicable, and not directly to the biological parents. The provisions of this subsection do not apply in a stepparent adoption.

[C77, 79, 81, §600.9]

94 Acts, ch 1046, §14, 15; 94 Acts, ch 1174, §7, 22; 99 Acts, ch 138, §3; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §12; 2001 Acts, ch 24, §67, 74

Referred to in §600.8, 600.14A

600.10 Minimum residence of a minor child.

The adoption of a minor person shall not be decreed until that person has lived with the adoption petitioner for a minimum residence period of one hundred eighty days. However, the juvenile court or court may waive this period if the adoption petitioner is a stepparent or related to the minor person within the fourth degree of consanguinity or may shorten this period upon good cause shown when the juvenile court or court is satisfied that the adoption petitioner and the person to be adopted are suited to each other.

[C27, 31, 35, §10501-b2; C39, §10501.2; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.2; C77, 79, 81, §600.10]

2000 Acts, ch 1145, §13

Referred to in §600.12A, 600.14A, 600.20

600.11 Notice of adoption hearing.

1. The juvenile court or court shall set the time and place of the adoption hearing prescribed in section 600.12 upon application of the petitioner. The juvenile court or court may continue the adoption hearing if the notice prescribed in subsections 2 and 3 is given, except that such notice shall only be given at least ten days prior to the date which has been set for the continuation of the adoption hearing.

2. a. At least twenty days before the adoption hearing, a copy of the petition and its attachments and a notice of the adoption hearing shall be given by the adoption petitioner to:

(1) A guardian, guardian ad litem if appointed for the adoption proceedings, and custodian of, and a person in a parent-child relationship with the person to be adopted. This subparagraph does not require notice to be given to a person whose parental rights have been terminated with regard to the person to be adopted.

(2) The person to be adopted who is an adult.

(3) Any person who is designated to make an investigation and report under section 600.8.

(4) Any other person who is required to consent under section 600.7.

(5) A person who has been granted visitation rights with the child to be adopted pursuant to section 600C.1.

(6) A person who is ordered to pay support or a postsecondary education subsidy pursuant

to section 598.21F, or chapter 234, 252A, 252C, 252F, 598, 600B, or any other chapter of the Code, for a person eighteen years of age or older who is being adopted by a stepparent, and the support order or order requires payment of support or postsecondary education subsidy for any period of time after the child reaches eighteen years of age.

b. Nothing in this subsection shall require the petitioner to give notice to self or to petitioner's spouse. A duplicate copy of the petition and its attachments shall be mailed to the department by the clerk of court at the time the petition is filed.

3. A notice of the adoption hearing shall state the time, place, and purpose of the hearing and shall be served in accordance with rule of civil procedure 1.305. Proof of the giving of notice shall be filed with the juvenile court or court prior to the adoption hearing. Acceptance of service by the party being given notice shall satisfy the requirements of this subsection.

[C27, 31, 35, §10501-b4; C39, §10501.4; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.4; C77, 79, 81, §600.11]

94 Acts, ch 1174, §8, 22; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §14; 2002 Acts, ch 1018, §20; 2005 Acts, ch 69, §54; 2007 Acts, ch 218, §207; 2011 Acts, ch 34, §133

Referred to in §600.12, 600.12A, 600.14A

600.12 Adoption hearing.

1. An adoption hearing shall be conducted informally as a hearing in equity. The hearing shall be reported.

2. Only those persons notified under section 600.11 and their witnesses and legal counsel or persons requested by the juvenile court or court to be present shall be admitted to the court chambers while an adoption hearing is being conducted. The adoption petitioner and the person to be adopted shall be present at the hearing, unless the presence of either is excused by the juvenile court or court.

3. Any person admitted to the hearing shall be heard and allowed to present evidence upon request and according to the manner in which the juvenile court or court conducts the hearing.

[C27, 31, 35, §10501-b4; C39, §10501.4; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.4; C77, 79, 81, §600.12]

2000 Acts, ch 1145, §15

Referred to in §600.7, 600.8, 600.11, 600.14A

600.12A Death of person to be adopted — process for final adoption decree.

1. If the person to be adopted dies following the filing of an adoption petition pursuant to section 600.3, but prior to issuance of a final adoption decree pursuant to section 600.13, the juvenile court or court may waive any investigations and reports required pursuant to section 600.8 that remain uncompleted, waive the minimum residence requirements pursuant to section 600.10, proceed to the adoption hearing, and issue a final adoption decree, unless any person to whom notice is to be provided pursuant to section 600.11 objects to the adoption.

2. If the person to be adopted dies following termination of the parental rights of the person's biological parents but prior to the filing of an adoption petition, the person who was the guardian or custodian of the person to be adopted prior to the person's death or the person who was in a parent-child relationship with the person to be adopted prior to the person's death may file an adoption petition and the juvenile court or court in the interest of justice may waive any other procedures or requirements related to the adoption, proceed to the adoption hearing, and issue a final adoption decree, unless any person to whom notice is to be provided pursuant to section 600.11 objects to the adoption.

3. A final adoption decree issued pursuant to this section terminates any parental rights existing prior to the time of its issuance and establishes the parent-child relationship between the adoption petitioner and the person adopted. However, the final adoption decree does not confer any rights on the adoption petitioner to the estate of the adopted person and does not confer any rights on the adopted person to the estate of the adoption petitioner.

98 Acts, ch 1064, §1, 3; 98 Acts, ch 1190, §31; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §16

600.13 Adoption decrees.

1. At the conclusion of the adoption hearing, the juvenile court or court shall do one of the following:

- a. Issue a final adoption decree.
- b. Issue an interlocutory adoption decree.
- c. Issue a standby adoption decree pursuant to section 600.14A.

d. Dismiss the adoption petition if the requirements of this chapter have not been met or if dismissal of the adoption petition is in the best interest of the person whose adoption has been petitioned. Upon dismissal, the juvenile court or court shall determine who is to be guardian or custodian of a minor child, including the adoption petitioner if it is in the best interest of the minor person whose adoption has been petitioned.

2. An interlocutory adoption decree automatically becomes a final adoption decree at a date specified by the juvenile court or court in the interlocutory adoption decree, which date shall not be less than one hundred eighty days nor more than three hundred sixty days from the date the interlocutory decree is issued. However, an interlocutory adoption decree may be vacated prior to the date specified for it to become final. Also, the juvenile court or court may provide in the interlocutory adoption decree for further observation, investigation, and report of the conditions of and the relationships between the adoption petitioner and the person petitioned to be adopted.

3. If an interlocutory adoption decree is vacated under subsection 2, it shall be void from the date of issuance and the rights, duties, and liabilities of all persons affected by it shall, unless they have become vested, be governed accordingly. Upon vacation of an interlocutory adoption decree, the juvenile court or court shall proceed under the provisions of subsection 1, paragraph “d”.

4. A final adoption decree terminates any parental rights, except those of a spouse of the adoption petitioner, existing at the time of its issuance and establishes the parent-child relationship between the adoption petitioner and the person petitioned to be adopted. Unless otherwise specified by law, such parent-child relationship shall be deemed to have been created at the birth of the child.

5. An interlocutory or a final adoption decree shall be entered with the clerk of court. Such decree shall set forth any facts of the adoption petition which have been proven to the satisfaction of the juvenile court or court and any other facts considered to be relevant by the juvenile court or court and shall grant the adoption petition. If so designated in the adoption decree, the name of the adopted person shall be changed by issuance of that decree. The clerk of the court shall, within thirty days of issuance, deliver one certified copy of any adoption decree to the petitioner, one copy of any adoption decree to the department and any agency or person making an independent placement who placed a minor person for adoption, and one certification of adoption as prescribed in section 144.19 to the state registrar of vital statistics. Upon receipt of the certification, the state registrar shall prepare a new birth certificate pursuant to section 144.23 and deliver to the parents named in the decree and any adult person adopted by the decree a copy of the new birth certificate. The parents shall pay the fee prescribed in section 144.46. If the person adopted was born outside this state but in the United States, the state registrar shall forward the certification of adoption to the appropriate agency in the state of birth. A copy of any interlocutory adoption decree vacation shall be delivered and another birth certificate shall be prepared in the same manner as a certification of adoption is delivered and the birth certificate was originally prepared.

[R60, §2601, 2602, 2603; C73, §2308, 2309, 2310; C97, §3251, 3252, 3253; S13, §3253; C24, §10498, 10499, 10500; C27, 31, 35, §10501-b5, 10501-b6, 10501-b8; C39, §10501.5, 10501.6, 10501.8; C46, 50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.5, 600.6, 600.8; C77, 79, 81, §600.13]

89 Acts, ch 140, §2; 99 Acts, ch 43, §2; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §17; 2000 Acts, ch 1232, §83; 2001 Acts, ch 24, §69, 74; 2001 Acts, ch 57, §4; 2002 Acts, ch 1040, §3, 5; 2003 Acts, ch 44, §101

Referred to in §600.7, 600.12A

600.14 Appeal — rules.

An appeal from any final order or decree rendered under this chapter or chapter 600A shall be taken in the same manner as an appeal is taken from a final judgment under the rules of

civil procedure. However, a rule of civil procedure provision regarding a minimum amount of value in controversy shall not bar an adoption appeal. The supreme court shall review an adoption appeal de novo.

The supreme court may adopt rules which provide for the expediting of contested cases under this chapter and chapter 600A.

[C77, 79, 81, §600.14]
94 Acts, ch 1174, §9, 22

600.14A Standby adoption.

1. As used in this section:

a. “*Standby adoption*” means an adoption in which a terminally ill parent consents to termination of parental rights and the issuance of a final adoption decree effective upon the occurrence of a future event, which is either the death of the terminally ill parent or the request of the parent for the issuance of a final adoption decree.

b. “*Terminally ill parent*” means an individual who has a medical prognosis by a licensed physician that the individual has an incurable and irreversible condition which will lead to death.

2. A terminally ill parent may consent to termination of parental rights and adoption of a child under a standby adoption if the other parent of the child is not living or the other parent has previously had the parent’s parental rights terminated.

3. A person who meets the qualifications to file an adoption petition pursuant to section 600.4 may file a petition for standby adoption. A standby adoption shall comply with the requirements of sections 600.7 through 600.12. However, the court may order that the completion of placement investigations and reports be expedited based on the circumstances of a particular case. The court may waive the minimum residence period requirement pursuant to section 600.10 to expedite the standby adoption if necessary.

4. If a consent to a standby adoption is attached to an adoption petition pursuant to section 600.6, the court determines that the requirements of this chapter relative to a standby adoption are met, and the court determines that the standby adoption is in the best interest of the child to be adopted, the court shall issue a standby adoption decree or a final adoption decree. However, the terminally ill parent’s parental rights shall not be terminated and the standby adoption shall not be finalized until the death of the terminally ill parent or the request of the terminally ill parent for issuance of the final adoption decree.

5. A standby adoption decree shall become final upon notice of the death of the terminally ill parent or upon the terminally ill parent’s request that a final adoption decree be issued. If the court determines at the time of the notice or request that the standby adoption is still in the best interest of the child, the court shall issue a final adoption decree.

2001 Acts, ch 57, §5
Referred to in §600.3, 600.6, 600.13

600.15 Foreign and international adoptions.

A decree establishing a parent-child relationship by adoption which is issued pursuant to due process of law by a juvenile court or court of any other jurisdiction within or outside the United States shall be recognized in this state.

[C77, 79, 81, §600.15]

87 Acts, ch 140, §1 – 3; 98 Acts, ch 1064, §2; 99 Acts, ch 138, §4; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §18; 2001 Acts, ch 24, §67, 74; 2002 Acts, ch 1040, §4, 5

Referred to in §144.25A

600.16 Adoption record — penalty for violations.

1. Any information compiled under section 600.8, subsection 1, paragraph “c”, relating to medical and developmental histories shall be made available at any time by the clerk of court, the department, or any agency which made the placement to:

a. The adopting parents.

b. The adopted person, provided that person is an adult at the time the request for information is made. For the purposes of this paragraph “*adult*” means a person twenty-one years of age or older or a person who attains majority by marriage.

c. Any person approved by the department if the person uses this information solely for the purposes of conducting a legitimate medical research project or of treating a patient in a medical facility.

d. A descendant of an adopted person.

2. Information regarding an adopted person's existing medical and developmental history and family medical history, which meets the definition of background information in section 600.8, subsection 1, paragraph "c", shall be made available as provided in subsection 1. However, the identity of the adopted person's biological parents shall not be disclosed.

3. The provisions of this section also apply to information collected pursuant to section 600A.4, pertaining to the family medical history, medical and developmental history, and social history of the person to be adopted.

4. Any person other than the adopting parents or the adopted person, who discloses information in violation of this section, is guilty of a simple misdemeanor for the first offense, a serious misdemeanor for a second offense, and an aggravated misdemeanor for a third or subsequent offense.

[C46, §600.9; C50, 54, 58, 62, 66, 71, 73, 75, §600.9, 600.10; C77, 79, 81, §600.16]

89 Acts, ch 102, §7; 91 Acts, ch 243, §3; 92 Acts, ch 1142, §1; 92 Acts, ch 1196, §3; 94 Acts, ch 1046, §16; 94 Acts, ch 1174, §10, 11, 22; 99 Acts, ch 138, §5

Referred to in §237.21, 238.24, 600.16B, 600A.4

600.16A Termination and adoption records closed — exceptions — penalty.

1. The permanent termination of parental rights record of the juvenile court under chapter 600A and the permanent adoption record of the juvenile court or court shall be sealed by the clerk of the juvenile court or the clerk of court, as appropriate, when they are complete and after the time for appeal has expired.

2. All papers and records pertaining to a termination of parental rights under chapter 600A and to an adoption shall not be open to inspection and the identity of the biological parents of an adopted person shall not be revealed except under any of the following circumstances:

a. An agency involved in placement shall contact the adopting parents or the adult adopted child regarding eligibility of the adopted child for benefits based on entitlement of benefits or inheritance from the terminated biological parents.

b. The juvenile court or court, for good cause, shall order the opening of the permanent adoption record of the juvenile court or court for the adopted person who is an adult and reveal the names of either or both of the biological parents following consideration of both of the following:

(1) A biological parent may file an affidavit requesting that the juvenile court or court reveal or not reveal the parent's identity. The juvenile court or court shall consider any such affidavit in determining whether there is good cause to order opening of the records. To facilitate the biological parents in filing an affidavit, the department shall, upon request of a biological parent, provide the biological parent with an adoption information packet containing an affidavit for completion and filing with the juvenile court or court.

(2) If the adopted person who applies for revelation of the biological parents' identity has a sibling who is a minor and who has been adopted by the same parents, the juvenile court or court may deny the application on the grounds that revelation to the applicant may also indirectly and harmfully permit the same revelation to the applicant's minor sibling.

c. A biological sibling of an adopted person may file or may request that the department file an affidavit in the juvenile court or court in which the adopted person's adoption records have been sealed requesting that the juvenile court or court reveal or not reveal the sibling's name to the adopted person. The juvenile court or court shall consider any such affidavit in determining whether there is good cause to order opening of the records upon application for revelation by the adopted person. However, the name of the biological sibling shall not be revealed until the biological sibling has attained majority.

d. The juvenile court or court may, upon competent medical evidence, open termination or adoption records if opening is shown to be necessary to save the life of or prevent irreparable physical or mental harm to an adopted person or the person's offspring. The juvenile court or court shall make every reasonable effort to prevent the identity of the

biological parents from becoming revealed under this paragraph to the adopted person. The juvenile court or court may, however, permit revelation of the identity of the biological parents to medical personnel attending the adopted person or the person's offspring. These medical personnel shall make every reasonable effort to prevent the identity of the biological parents from becoming revealed to the adopted person.

3. In addition to other procedures by which adoption records may be opened under this section, if both of the following conditions are met, the department, the clerk of court, or the agency which made the placement shall open the adoption record for inspection and shall reveal the identity of the biological parents to the adult adopted child or the identity of the adult adopted child to the biological parents:

a. A biological parent has placed in the adoption record written consent to revelation of the biological parent's identity to the adopted child at an age specified by the biological parent, upon request of the adopted child.

b. An adult adopted child has placed in the adoption record written consent to revelation of the identity of the adult adopted child to a biological parent.

A person who has placed in the adoption record written consent pursuant to paragraph "a" or "b" of this subsection may withdraw the consent at any time by placing a written withdrawal of consent statement in the adoption record.

Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, if the adult adopted person has a sibling who is a minor and who has also been adopted by the same parents, the department, the clerk of court, or the agency which made the placement may deny the request of either the adult adopted person or the biological parent to open the adoption records and to reveal the identities of the parties pending determination by the juvenile court or court that there is good cause to open the records pursuant to subsection 2.

4. An adopted person whose adoption became final prior to July 4, 1941, and whose adoption record was not required to be sealed at the time when the adoption record was completed, shall not be required to show good cause for an order opening the adoption record under this subsection, provided that the juvenile court or court shall consider any affidavit filed under this subsection.

5. Notwithstanding subsection 2, a termination of parental rights order issued pursuant to this chapter, section 600A.9, or any other chapter shall be disclosed to the child support recovery unit, upon request, without court order.

6. Any person, other than the adopting parents or the adopted person, who discloses information in violation of this section, is guilty of a simple misdemeanor.

92 Acts, ch 1142, §2; 92 Acts, ch 1196, §4; 94 Acts, ch 1046, §17; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §19 – 21; 2001 Acts, ch 79, §3; 2005 Acts, ch 112, §19

Referred to in §144.24, 237.21, 238.24, 600.16B

600.16B Fees.

The supreme court shall prescribe and the department of human services shall adopt rules, to defray the actual cost of the provision of information or the opening of records pursuant to section 600.16 or 600.16A.

92 Acts, ch 1196, §5

600.17 Financial assistance.

The department of human services shall, within the limits of funds appropriated to the department of human services and any gifts or grants received by the department for this purpose, provide financial assistance to any person who adopts a child with physical or mental disabilities or an older or otherwise hard-to-place child, if the adoptive parent has the capability of providing a suitable home for the child but the need for special services or the costs of maintenance are beyond the economic resources of the adoptive parent.

1. Financial assistance shall not be provided when the special services are available free of cost to the adoptive parent or are covered by an insurance policy of the adoptive parent.

2. "Special services" means any medical, dental, therapeutic, educational, or other similar service or appliance required by an adopted child by reason of a mental or physical disability.

3. The department of human services shall make adoption presubsidy and adoption subsidy payments to adoptive parents at the beginning of the month for the current month.

[C73, 75, §600.11; C77, 79, 81, §600.17]

83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159; 96 Acts, ch 1129, §102; 2005 Acts, ch 175, §126

Referred to in §225C.38, 234.47, 600.5, 600.18, 600.22, 627.19

600.18 Determination of assistance.

Any prospective adoptive parent desiring financial assistance shall state this fact in the petition for adoption. The department of human services shall investigate the person petitioning for adoption and the child and shall file with the juvenile court or court a statement of whether the department will provide assistance as provided in sections 600.17 to 600.22, the estimated amount, extent, and duration of assistance, and any other information the juvenile court or court may order.

If the department of human services is unable to determine that an insurance policy will cover the costs of special services, it shall proceed as if no policy existed, for the purpose of determining eligibility to receive assistance. The department shall, to the amount of financial assistance given, be subrogated to the rights of the adoptive parent in the insurance contract.

[C73, 75, §600.12; C77, 79, 81, §600.18]

83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159; 2000 Acts, ch 1145, §22

Referred to in §600.5, 600.22, 627.19

600.19 Amount of assistance.

The amount of financial assistance for maintenance shall not exceed the amount the department would normally spend for foster care of the child. The amount of financial assistance for special services shall not exceed the amount the department would normally spend if it were to provide these services.

[C73, 75, §600.13; C77, 79, 81, §600.19]

Referred to in §600.5, 600.18, 600.22, 627.19

600.20 Availability of assistance.

Financial assistance shall be available only if the child to be adopted was under the guardianship of the state, county, or a licensed child-placing agency immediately prior to adoption. The one-hundred-eighty-day period of residence in the proposed home required in section 600.10 shall not apply to this section.

[C73, 75, §600.14; C77, 79, 81, §600.20]

Referred to in §600.5, 600.18, 600.22, 627.19

600.21 Termination of assistance.

Financial assistance shall terminate when the need for assistance no longer exists. Financial assistance shall not extend beyond the adopted child's twenty-first birthday.

[C73, 75, §600.15; C77, 79, 81, §600.21]

Referred to in §600.5, 600.18, 600.22, 627.19

600.22 Rules.

The department of human services shall adopt rules in accordance with the provisions of chapter 17A, which are necessary for the administration of sections 600.17 to 600.21 and 600.23.

[C73, 75, §600.16; C77, 79, 81, §600.22]

83 Acts, ch 96, §157, 159; 87 Acts, ch 102, §1

Referred to in §600.5, 600.18, 627.19

600.23 Adoption assistance compact.

1. *Purpose.* The department of human services may enter into interstate agreements with state agencies of other states for the protection of children on behalf of whom adoption subsidy is being provided by the department of human services and to provide procedures for interstate children's adoption assistance payments, including medical payments.

2. *Compact authorization and definitions.*

a. The Iowa department of human services may enter into interstate agreements with

state agencies of other states for the provision of medical services to adoptive families who participate in the subsidized adoption or adoption assistance program.

b. The Iowa department of human services may develop, participate in the development of, negotiate, and enter into one or more interstate compacts on behalf of this state with other states to implement one or more of the purposes set forth in this section. When so entered into, and for so long as it shall remain in force, such a compact shall have the force and effect of law.

c. For the purposes of this section, the term “state” means a state of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or a territory or possession of or administered by the United States.

d. For the purposes of this section, the term “adoption assistance or subsidized adoption state” means the state that is signatory to an adoption assistance agreement in a particular case.

e. For the purposes of this section, the term “residence state” means the state of which the child is a resident by virtue of the residence of the adoptive parents.

3. *Compact contents.* A compact entered into pursuant to the authority conferred by this section shall have the following content:

a. A provision making it available for joinder by all states.

b. A provision or provisions for withdrawal from the compact upon written notice to the parties, but with a period of one year between the date of the notice and the effective date of the withdrawal.

c. A requirement that the protections afforded by or pursuant to the compact continue in force for the duration of the adoption assistance and be applicable to all children and their adoptive parents who on the effective date of the withdrawal are receiving adoption assistance from a party state other than the one in which they are resident and have their principal place of abode.

d. A requirement that each instance of adoption assistance to which the compact applies be covered by an adoption assistance agreement in writing between the adoptive parents and the state child welfare agency of the state which undertakes to provide the adoption assistance, and that any such agreement be expressly for the benefit of the adopted child and enforceable by the adoptive parents, and the state agency providing the adoption assistance.

e. Such other provisions as may be appropriate to implement the proper administration of the compact.

4. *Medical assistance.*

a. A child with special needs residing in this state who is the subject of an adoption assistance agreement with another state shall be entitled to receive a medical assistance card from this state upon the filing of a certified copy of the adoption assistance agreement obtained from the adoption assistance state. In accordance with regulations of the Iowa department of human services, the adoptive parents shall be required at least annually to show that the agreement is still in force or has been renewed.

b. The Iowa department of human services shall consider the holder of a medical assistance card pursuant to this section as any other holder of a medical assistance card under the laws of this state and shall process and make payment on claims on account of such holder in the same manner and pursuant to the same conditions and procedures as for other recipients of medical assistance.

c. The Iowa department of human services shall provide coverage and benefits for a child who is in another state and who is covered by an adoption subsidy agreement made prior to July 1, 1987 by the Iowa department of human services for the coverage or benefits, if any, not provided by the residence state. The adoptive parents acting for the child may submit evidence of payment for services or benefit amounts not payable in the residence state and shall be reimbursed for such expense. However, reimbursement shall not be made for services or benefit amounts covered under any insurance or other third party medical contract or arrangement held by the child or the adoptive parents. The additional coverages and benefit amounts provided pursuant to this subsection shall be for services to the cost of which there is no federal contribution, or which, if federally aided, are not provided by the

residence state. Such regulations shall include procedures to be followed in obtaining prior approvals for services in those instances where required for the assistance.

d. A person who submits a claim for payment or reimbursement for services or benefits pursuant to this subsection or makes any statement in connection therewith, which claim or statement the maker knows or should know to be false, misleading, or fraudulent is guilty of an aggravated misdemeanor.

e. This subsection applies only to medical assistance for children under adoption assistance agreements from states that have entered into a compact with this state under which the other state provides medical assistance to children with special needs under adoption subsidy agreements made by this state. All other children entitled to medical assistance pursuant to adoption assistance agreements entered into by this state shall be eligible to receive medical assistance in accordance with the laws and procedures applicable to medical assistance.

87 Acts, ch 102, §2

Referred to in §600.22

600.24 Access to records.

The department may allow access to adoption records held by the department or an agency if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The identity of the biological parents of the adopted person is concealed from the person gaining access to the records.

2. The person gaining access to the records uses them solely for the purposes of conducting a legitimate medical research project or of treating a patient in a medical facility.

[C79, 81, §600.24]

92 Acts, ch 1142, §3; 94 Acts, ch 1046, §18

600.25 Pending parental rights unaffected.

A termination of parental rights proceeding or an adoption proceeding pending on January 1, 1977, or a release of parental rights or affidavit of consent or consent to adopt properly given prior to January 1, 1977 shall not be affected by the provisions of chapter 600A.

[C79, 81, §600.25]