

Benefits of Second Parent Adoption

Second parent adoption allows a non-biological parent to adopt his or her partner's biological or adopted child without terminating the parental status of the biological parent partner.

In addition to protecting the child and the parental role of the second parent, there are often strong emotional reasons for a second parent adoption. A second parent may have come to be considered a child's "real parent" by both the child and the parent.

In Washington and Oregon, the adopting second parent may be married to one of the child's biological parents. This is commonly referred to as a "step-parent adoption". Both Washington and Oregon also allow the **unmarried** partner of a child's biological parent to adopt the child, thus creating two legal parents who are not married.

Second parent adoptions provide children who are raised in unmarried families with financial and legal protections that may not otherwise be afforded to them.

- The child can receive health care insurance coverage through the adopting parent's employer.
- The child may receive workers' compensation benefits from an adopting parent's work-related injury.
- The child can receive Social Security disability benefits from an adopting parent's disability.
- If the parents separate, the child may be entitled to support from the adopting second parent.
- If the parents separate, the court may order parenting, custody, and visitation time between the child and the adopting second parent.

Second parent adoptions protect the child and the family if the child's biological parent dies or becomes incapacitated.

- Without a second parent adoption, the child could be removed from the non-biological parent's care and placed with relatives or in foster care.
- This could happen even if the non-biological parent is designated as the child's guardian, since guardianships can be challenged in court.

Second parent adoptions are important if the child becomes ill.

- An adopting second parent is entitled to parental leave under the federal and most state Family and Medical Leave Acts.
- Adopting second parents have the authority to consent to medical treatment for the child.
- Adopting second parents are entitled to visit the child in the hospital or medical facility.

Disclaimer The statements contained in this document are for informational purposes only. They may or may not apply to your specific situation and should not be considered as legal advice. Please consult an attorney for assistance and advice regarding your specific circumstances.