

YOUR WORKING CHECKLIST

Stepfamily immigration: a qualifying relationship is different from adoption

What makes a stepfamily immigration question different from an adoption question?

A step relationship arises from a parent's marriage, while adoption is a separate legal event. The official relationship framework applies specific timing and parent-child definitions. Do not assume adoption is always required or that a household label establishes an immigration relationship.

Check the boxes on screen or by hand. Use the notes area for records to find and questions to ask.

Your preparation checklist

- ☐ Preserve the official record creating the stepfamily connection.
- ☐ Identify the child and relevant parent information.
- ☐ Keep prior marriages or terminations in the factual chronology.
- ☐ Link the legal events without deciding which statutory rule applies.

Notes and questions to follow up

Source links and current instructions

Sources checked October 25, 2026. Follow current instructions at the linked institution.

Department of State: 9 FAM 102.8: statutory family relationships

<https://fam.state.gov/fam/O9FAM/O9FAM010208.html>

USCIS: I-130: Petition for Alien Relative

<https://www.uscis.gov/i-130>

Immigrant Insider: Editorial policy and verification status

<https://immigrantinsider.com/editorial-policy/>

USCIS: Adoption: court, parent and child immigration processes

<https://www.uscis.gov/adoption>

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<https://immigrantinsider.com/immigration-paths/family/stepfamily/>

General information

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