

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE
SEVENTEENTH JUDICIAL IN
AND FOR BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. II-00-F-6

IN RE:

PARENTING EDUCATION COURSE

In accordance with the authority vested in the Chief Judge by Rule 2.050 of the Florida Rules of Judicial Administration and Florida Statutes, and pursuant to Section 10(D) of the Family Plan, and 61.21 of Florida Statutes, it is

ORDERED:

1. When a dissolution of marriage action is filed where children are involved, the parties will be required to attend an educational course regarding dissolution, custody, visitation, and shared parental responsibility.
2. The Clerk of Courts shall provide the petitioning party or attorney a copy of this order and a list of the parenting courses approved by the court.

The Clerk of Courts shall provide for service on the respondent along with initial pleadings, a copy of this order, and a list of the court approved parenting courses.

The list shall include the names of the court approved course providers and telephone numbers where inquiries may be made concerning registration, as well as other pertinent information that may be necessary to assist the petitioner and respondent in selecting an approved course.

3. It will be the responsibility of the petitioner or petitioning attorney to schedule his/her client for an approved parenting course within ten (10) days of filing and it will be the responsibility of the respondent or respondent's attorney to schedule his/her client for an approved parenting course within ten (10) days of filing the responsive pleadings. Unless attendance at the parenting course has been excused by the Court, the course must be completed within thirty (30) days of the date of registration.

The parents may attend classes together or separately.

4. Specific subject matter is required for court approved providers offering this program. An equivalent parenting program may be accepted or designated by the Court provided the following subject areas are covered:

- a. Divorce as a loss: The stages of grief for parents and for children;
- b. Permanency of the parental role/shared parenting;
- c. Developmental stages of children and the impact of divorce during each stage;
- d. Parent-to-child communication techniques and parent-to-parent communication techniques;
- e. Parent-Child access (Visitation);
- f. Families in transition (economic changes, parental dating, step parenting issues, loss of community for the adults and the children, residential and nonresidential parenting;
- g. Child Abuse;
- h. Domestic Violence;
- I. Commonly used terms in the dissolution of marriage process;
- j. Community resources for divorcing parents and their children.

5. Within ten (10) days of completion of any court accepted parenting course, the parties must provide a certificate of completion to the Clerk of Courts with a copy to the opposing side. The Clerk of Courts shall file the certificates of completion in the court file.

The parties shall file the certificate of completion prior to the final hearing. This shall, however, in no way preclude either party from seeking emergency relief at any time. If the responding party has defaulted in the action and has failed to complete the course, the final hearing may be scheduled by the petitioner; however, the petitioner must bring to the Court's attention the respondent's failure to comply with this Administrative Order.

6. Failure to comply with this order may result in the Court's dismissal of action, striking of pleadings, and/or other appropriate sanctions.

7. Notwithstanding the terms of this order, nothing herein should be construed to preclude the Court from requiring the parents to attend a parenting course in a paternity or support action, or in any other action which involves custody, visitation, or shared parenting issues.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED:

1. The court administrative staff shall establish a time frame to screen applicants who wish to become court approved providers for the Parent Education Course, and shall implement specific standards regarding course content, duration of class instruction, instructor qualifications, distribution of materials, certificates of completion, advance notice of class schedules, statistical and other reports to the court, as well as related educational and operational matters.

The administrative staff shall develop an application process and shall determine those programs that meet the court's qualifications and shall provide a list of approved programs to the Clerk of Courts. The administrative staff shall also develop a method for monitoring the performance of the education courses on a regular basis, and, for removing programs from the approved providers' list for failure to comply to the court's standards, time frames, and requirements.

2. All approved providers shall offer enrollment, instruction, and all other parenting course privileges to indigent parties at no cost, and shall distribute certificates of completion to qualified indigent participants at the conclusion of the course. Persons who have qualified for indigent status will have an official indigency document with the signature of a judge or Clerk of Courts.

3. The court administrative staff shall be authorized to take necessary measures to implement additional requirements for providers when necessary to meet state statutes or community needs, and/or to protect the integrity of the Parenting Course.

This Order replaces Administrative Order No. II-95-F-6.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Broward County, Florida, this 25th day of October, 2000.

/s/DALE ROSS

Dale Ross, Chief Judge