

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
LAKE COUNTY, FLORIDA

Amended
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER L2000-12A

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER REQUIRING MANDATORY EDUCATION FOR
PARENTS OF MINOR CHILDREN IN A DISSOLUTION OR PATERNITY ACTION**

A substantial number of dissolution and paternity cases involve questions of custody, parental responsibility, primary physical residence, and visitation. The legislature, recognizing the adverse effect of divorce and separation on children, require parents to complete a 4 hour Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course. F.S. §61.21. The class assists parents to minimize the effects of their separation on the children. Therefore, it is

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED as follows:

PARENT EDUCATION AND STABILIZATION COURSE

1. In all paternity actions and dissolutions with minor children that involve custody, parental responsibility, primary physical residence, or visitation, parents are required to attend and successfully complete a 4 hour education program within 60 days from date of the Order Requiring Parenting Course.

2. Both parents do not need to attend the course together. The parents may attend as their schedules permit.

3. The presiding judge may excuse a parent from a course upon a showing of good cause.

4. Unless excused by the presiding judge, the parties shall file a certificate of completion provided by the program provider with the Clerk of the Circuit Court before entry of a final judgment.

5. The course content shall comply with minimum curriculum standards developed pursuant to the legislative mandate, to wit:

- (1) Legal aspects of deciding child-related issues between parents.
- (2) Emotional aspects of separation and divorce on adults.
- (3) Emotional aspects of separation and divorce on children.
- (4) Family relationship and family dynamics.
- (5) Financial responsibilities to a child or children.
- (6) Issues regarding spousal or child abuse and neglect.
- (7) Skill-based relationship education that may be generalized to parenting, workplace, school, neighborhood, and civic relationships.

6. The Clerk of the Circuit Court shall maintain a list of approved Lake County providers, which will be updated by the Clerk on an annual basis or as needed. However, any Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course approved by a judicial circuit within the State of Florida may be accepted.

7. The Clerk of the Circuit Court shall furnish the *Order Requiring Parenting Course* and a list of approved Lake County providers to the Petitioner or the Petitioner's counsel at the time of the filing of the petition for determination of paternity or dissolution of marriage with minor children.

It is the responsibility of the Petitioner and/or Petitioner's counsel to provide the Respondent with a copy of the *Order Requiring Parenting Course* and

a list of approved Lake County providers by including same with the petition at time of service. In cases where the Clerk of the Circuit Court forwards the petition to the Sheriff for service, a copy of said Order and list of providers shall be included.

The Clerk of the Circuit Court shall document proof of compliance with this provision.

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

9. 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 support action or in any other post-judgment action which involves custody and visitation issues.

DONE AND ORDERED in chambers at Tavares, Lake County, Florida, this 19 day of DECEMBER, 2000.



DON F. BRIGGS
ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE
LAKE COUNTY