

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 16TH
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF THE STATE OF
FLORIDA, IN AND FOR MONROE COUNTY

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER: 5.013/24-1
AMENDED

APPROVAL OF PARENT EDUCATION
AND FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSES

WHEREAS, Florida Statute Section 61.21(2) requires that the Department of Children and Family Services approve a parenting course designed to educate, train, and assist divorcing parents in regard to the consequences of divorce on parents and children for each Judicial Circuit, and to provide each judicial Circuit with a list of approved course providers; and

WHEREAS, it is beneficial to parents who are separating or divorcing to have available an educational program that will provide general information regarding the issues, and legal procedures for resolving custody and child support disputes, the emotional experiences and problems of divorcing adults, the family problems and emotional concerns and needs of the children, and the availability of community resources and services;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED as follows:

- (1) Pursuant to Florida Statute Section 61.21(4)(a), all parties to a dissolution of marriage proceeding with minor children, or a paternity action which involves issues of parental responsibility shall be required to complete a Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course prior to the entry of a final judgment by the Court. If the parties have children who have identified special needs or emotional concerns, the parties must select a Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course that is tailored to education relating to children who have special needs or emotional concerns. The Court may excuse a party from attending the parenting course, or from completing the course within the required time frame, for good cause. The Court may, without motion of either party, prohibit the parenting course from being taken together, if there is a history of domestic violence. Nothing in this administrative order shall be construed to require the parties to a dissolution of marriage to attend a court-approved parenting course together.
- (2) The Court may require that parties to a modification of a final judgment involving shared parental responsibilities, custody, or visitation, complete a Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course prior to the entry of an order modifying the final judgment.
- (3) The Court may at its discretion, require a parent to attend educational courses

relating to children who have special needs or emotional concerns in addition to the Parenting Education and Stabilization Course required under this section.

- (4) All parties required to complete a parenting course shall begin the course as expeditiously as possible after filing their petitions. For dissolution of marriage actions, the Petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after filing the petition, and all other parties must complete the course within 45 days after service of the petition. For paternity actions, the petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after filing the petition, and any other party must complete the course within 45 days after acknowledgement of paternity by that party, an adjudication of paternity of that party, or an order granting time-sharing to or support from that party. Each party shall be required to file proof of compliance with the Court prior to the entry of the final judgment.
- (5) The court may hold any parent who fails to attend a required parenting course in contempt, or that parent may be denied shared parental responsibility or time-sharing or otherwise sanctioned as the court deems appropriate.

Administrative Order 5.013/03-1 entered into on June 24, 2003, is amended in its entirety and rescinded as of the date of execution below.

DONE AND SIGNED in Chambers, at Key West, Monroe County, Florida, this 16th day of September, 2024.



Honorable Bonnie J. Helms
Chief Judge