

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE  
EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO.:**  
**14-05**  
**SUPERSEDES 13-20-B AMENDED**

**IN RE: DOMESTIC RELATIONS – REQUIREMENT TO COMPLETE THE PARENT  
EDUCATION AND FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSE IN DISSOLUTION OF  
MARRIAGE PROCEEDING WITH MINOR CHILDREN OR A PATERNITY  
ACTION THAT INVOLVES ISSUES OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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The Family Division Judges of the Eighteen Judicial Circuit have determined that a substantial portion of family law cases filed involve custody and visitation with minor children, and that a divorce or separation of their parents may detrimentally affect the children and the family relationships of the separating parents; that the children often become innocent unintended victims of the problems and “wars” of their parents; and the Court being concerned with the potential harmful impact on the children in such situations, including possible loss of self-esteem and pride, feelings of guilt in causing their parent’s break-up, weakened trust and feelings of loyalty, anger, and the economic and social impact of the break-up of the home, all of which may lead to decrease in school performance, social difficulties, grief, problems with anger, guilt syndromes, depression, unacceptable behavior, anxiety about intimate relationships, concerns about betrayal and abandonment, feelings of being unloved, and viewing the world as unsafe and unreliable; and the Court being desirous of providing a means to assist both the parents and the children in coping with the break-up of their home; and to insure that the parents understand and are aware of the perspective of the children and the potential psychological and emotional trauma of the children; and to provide education resulting in recognition by the parents of the signs of trauma or distress in the children related to the separation or divorce and methods of assisting the children to cope with the trauma or distress beneficially, which will hopefully better society, and refocus the energies of the parents in a constructive rather than destructive manner to protect their children, and in consideration thereof

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that successful completion of the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course is a required policy for all parties to dissolution of marriage proceeding with minor children or a paternity action that involves issues of parental responsibility as a condition precedent to obtaining a Final Judgment. A party may be excused from attending the parenting

course or from completing the parenting course within a certain time period, provided the court determines that the party has shown good cause. For dissolution of marriage actions, the petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after the filing of the petition, unless excused by the court. 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, unless excused by the court. Any other party must complete the course within 45 days after an acknowledgement of paternity by that party, an adjudication of paternity of that party, or an order granting visitation to or support from that party. Each party to a dissolution or paternity action shall file proof of compliance with the court prior to the entry of the final judgment.

All parties are required to complete the parenting course as quickly as possible. The parties are required to complete the parenting course by appearing in person. The parties may apply to the Court to take the parenting course on-line if they demonstrate good cause to the Court.

A copy of the "Standing Order of Referral Requiring Parties to Attend the Parent and Education Stabilization Course" (ATTACHMENT 1) shall be provided at the time of filing to the Petitioner by the Clerk of the Court and a copy of said Order shall be served on the opposing party(s) by Petitioner. Said Order of Referral shall be attached to the original pleadings by the Clerk of the Court.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that each provider offering a parenting course must be approved by the Department of Children and Family Services. The Department of Children and Family Services shall provide the Clerk of Court with a list of approved course providers and sites at which the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course may be completed. The list shall be made available to the parties so that they may attend the parenting class of their choice.

The Department of Children and Family Services may remove a provider who violates these requirements, or its implementing rules, from the list of approved course providers.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all parties to a modification of a final judgment involving shared parental responsibilities, custody, or visitation may be required to complete a court-approved parenting course prior to the entry of an order modifying the final judgment.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED a reasonable fee may be charged to each parent attending the course.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that if any parent fails to attend the required Parent Education and Family Stabilization course, the court may hold the defaulting parent in contempt.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the court may, with or without motion of either party, prohibit the parenting course from being taken together, if there is a history of domestic violence between the parties.

Done and Ordered this 16th day of January, 2014.

JOHN M. HARRIS  
JOHN M. HARRIS  
CHIEF JUDGE

DISTRIBUTION:

All Circuit and County Judges (Brevard County)  
Court Administration (Brevard County)  
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**ATTACHMENT 1**

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**STANDING ORDER OF REFERRAL REQUIRING PARTIES TO ATTEND  
PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSE**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Order, the Petition filed herein includes a request for relief involving minor children of the parties. It is thereupon

ORDERED AND ADJUDGED that each of the parties shall attend a Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course. For dissolution of marriage actions, the petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after the filing of the petition, unless excused by the court. 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, unless excused by the court. Any other party must complete the course within 45 days after an acknowledgement of paternity by that party, an adjudication of paternity of that party, or an order granting visitation to or support from that party. A list of providers may be obtained from the Clerk of the Court or from their website, Brevard County [www.brevardclerk.us](http://www.brevardclerk.us), Seminole County <http://www.seminoleclerk.org>. Each party is responsible for contacting the providers, scheduling attendance, completion of the seminar and payment of the seminar fee.

Upon completion of the seminar, you must submit your Certificate of Completion to the Clerk of the Court, Brevard County Clerk of Court, P.O. Box 219, Titusville, Florida, 32781-0219, along with the above case number, Seminole County Clerk of Court, P.O. Box 8099, Sanford, FL 32772-8099, along with the above case number.

This parenting course, ordered by the court, shall apply regardless of whether the parties were legally married and in family cases involving family member visitation, etc.

Copies provided to:

Petitioner by  hand delivery  mail

Respondent by  mail  attached to Summons

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ Clerk of the Court

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk