

IN THE FAMILY COURT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY  
STATE OF MISSOURI

FAMILY COURT ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE ORDER NO. 40A  
(Amended August 1, 2017)

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER GOVERNING  
IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATION OF PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the Family Court of St. Louis County was created by Sections 487.010 through 487.190 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri;

WHEREAS, the Honorable Thea A. Sherry has been appointed Administrative Judge of the Family Court of St. Louis County pursuant to Section 487.010.3 R.S.Mo.;

WHEREAS, certain Specifications and Procedures governing the implementation and operation of the St. Louis County Parent Education Program, dated and effective October 1, 1995, were incorporated by reference in Family Court Administrative Judge Order No. 40 issued on September 15, 1995; and

WHEREAS, said Specifications and Procedures were later amended pursuant to amendments of Administrative Judge Order No. 40, issued on July 14, 1997, September 1, 1998, April 28, 2004, and March 1, 2009; and


WHEREAS, a further modification to said Specifications and Procedures, making certain other minor changes to said Specifications and Procedures is now warranted;

NOW THEREFORE IT IS ORDERED that, effective August 1, 2017, Family Court Administrative Judge Order No. 40A be and is hereby further amended so as to incorporate by reference new Specifications and Procedures dated August 1, 2017 (attached hereto) for the St. Louis County Parent Education Program. These new

Specifications and Procedures shall, in addition to making certain minor changes to previous versions thereof, require that, unless otherwise exempted, all parties to a petition for dissolution of marriage, legal separation, paternity action or petition for custody action, who have in common at least one child under age 19 and all parties to a motion to modify a prior dissolution of marriage, paternity action or petition for custody action where custody or visitation of a child under age 19 is involved, shall pay a fee of \$50.00 which shall constitute payment of all services rendered pursuant to the aforementioned Parent Education Program. Certification of Attendance shall be submitted along with a Proposed Judgment in a non-contested matter or on the first day of trial. Such proof of compliance shall be submitted even if previously filed with the Court.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Circuit Clerk provide notice of this amendment by causing this order to be published as soon as practicable in *The St. Louis Countian*, by posting a copy of this order in a conspicuous place in the Office of the Circuit Clerk, and by making copies of this order available for distribution from the Office of the Circuit Clerk.

SO ORDERED:

  
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Thea A. Sherry  
Administrative Judge

Entered this 15<sup>th</sup> day of August 2017.

**FAMILY COURT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY**  
**PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES**  
**Effective August 1, 2017**

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1. Introduction

The Family Court Act, Chapter 487, RSMo. was passed by the Missouri State Legislature in 1993 thereby creating a Family Court system in certain Missouri counties. As part of the implementation of the Family Court, effective October 1, 1995, St. Louis County mandated that all parties to a petition for dissolution of marriage who have in common at least one child under age 19, attend a one session educational class designed to help families cope with changes resulting from the dissolution of marriage process. In addition, effective August 28, 1998, all parties to a petition for legal separation who have in common at least one child under age 19, and all parties to a motion to modify a prior dissolution of marriage where custody or visitation of a child under age 19 is involved shall attend an identical or similar educational class, regardless of whether said parties have previously attended such an educational class. In addition, effective March 1, 2009, all parties to a paternity action involving custody or visitation of at least one child under age 19 or a motion to modify a prior paternity action where custody or visitation of a child under age 19 is involved shall attend an identical or similar educational class, regardless of whether said parties have previously attended such an educational class. In addition, effective August 1, 2017, all parties to a paternity or petition for custody action, and all parties to a motion to modify a paternity or petition for custody action where custody or visitation of a child under 19 is involved, shall attend an identical or similar educational class, regardless of whether said parties have previously attended such an educational class. Further, participants to other proceedings under Chapter 487, R.S.Mo. may be ordered to attend the class. Provided by an independent, private, or nonprofit Contractor in the St. Louis community, (the "Contractor"), the class will be offered at various times and locations in the community. Participants will be assessed a fee to be collected and retained by the Contractor. The Contractor shall be selected in accordance with bidding procedures of the Family Court of St. Louis County.

2. Goals

The goals of the Parent Education Program are:

- To help parents understand the divorce/separation process and its impact on adults and children of all ages.
- To encourage parents to communicate and respond appropriately with each other and their children as they plan for each child's well-being and the family's transitions.
- To help parents learn to resolve grief, anger, and conflict successfully, and to assist their children with these issues.
- To encourage parents to continue their parental relationship and financial responsibilities with each child, despite the changes in marital status and living arrangements.
- To provide information to parents regarding community resources that may be helpful to adults and children of divorcing/separating families.
- To provide parties information about the use of mediation in resolving domestic relations matters at both pre-and post- dissolution phases, and to make available the Court Approved List of Mediators.

3. Description of Classes

Each class will be approximately two hours and fifteen minutes. The Contractor will provide a one hour and forty-five minute parent education segment, followed by general questions, distribution of handouts and an evaluation survey. Court-related staff may or may not be present to monitor and/or participate.

**A. Class for parents involved in Divorce, Legal Separation, Declaration of Paternity or Petition for Custody**

The class will address the following topics:

1. Divorce/Legal Separation/Paternity/Custody- Impact on Parents
  - a. Adult's Perspective
  - b. Emotional Aspects of Divorce or separation
  - c. Grieving Process
  - d. Anger Phase and Healing
2. Divorce/Legal Separation/Paternity/Custody - Impact on Children
  - a. Child's Perspective
  - b. Age Specific Reactions to Divorce or separation
  - c. Appropriate Responses of Parents
  - d. Special Considerations
3. Video that focuses on children in separation
4. Children's Bill of Rights
5. Maintaining Parenting Relationships
6. Discussion

**B. Class for Parents involved in a Motion to Modify a Divorce, Legal Separation, Paternity or Petition for Custody Action.**

This class shall be offered at least one time per month (and more frequently if so required by other provisions of these program specifications) for parents who are involved in a motion to modify a prior dissolution, or paternity or petition for custody action where custody or visitation of a child under age 19 is involved.

The class shall address the unique issues concerning the needs of children and challenges for parents who are engaged in repeat litigation concerning parenting matters. The focus of the class shall be on the development of parental communication and problem solving skills. Such a focus will require an interactive, participatory approach. The length of the class shall be the same as the class for divorcing, legal separation, declaration of paternity or petition for custody parents.

**C. The Court may provide specialized videos for the above-described classes.**

**4. Notice of Mandatory Parent Education Class and of Mediation Services**

A Notice of Mandatory Parent Education Classes and of Mediation Services, a copy of which is attached hereto, shall be available from the Office of the Circuit Clerk and the offices of Domestic Relations Services. A copy of the Notice must be distributed to all parties to a dissolution of marriage proceeding, a legal separation proceeding, a declaration of paternity or petition for custody or to a motion to modify a prior dissolution of marriage, paternity determination or petition for custody where custody or visitation of a child under age 19 is involved as provided herein:

To Petitioner or Movant (hereinafter referred to as "Petitioner"): Petitioner's attorney, or if Petitioner is unrepresented, the Office of the Circuit Clerk, shall provide a copy of the Notice to Petitioner. Receipt of the Notice shall be acknowledged by certification on the revised Family Court Filing Certificate, a copy of which is attached hereto, which shall be filed with Petitioner's first pleading.

**FAMILY COURT OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY  
PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM SPECIFICATIONS AND PROCEDURES  
Effective August 1, 2017**

To Respondent: Petitioner's attorney, or if Petitioner is unrepresented, the Office of the Circuit Clerk, shall attach a copy of the Notice to the service copy of the petition for service upon Respondent. If Respondent files a voluntary entry of appearance and waiver of service of summons, Respondent's attorney, or if Respondent is unrepresented, Petitioner's attorney, shall provide a copy of the Notice to Respondent.

5. Attendance

All parties are required to attend the Parent Education Class unless exempted by the Court. The Petitioner is required to attend the Parent Education Class within 45 days of the date of filing. The Respondent is required to attend the class within 45 days after the date of service or the filing of a voluntary entry of appearance and waiver.

6. Exemptions With Judicial Approval

Parties who reside more than 100 miles from St. Louis County may be granted exemption by the Court from the Parent Education Class. Parties who are incapacitated and parties who are incarcerated also may be granted exemption. A signed affidavit describing the reason for requesting an exemption must be submitted by the party, or by the attorney for the party, requesting exemption to the judge, who may give written approval for the request.

7. Default

Default by the Respondent shall not excuse Petitioner's attendance at the Parent Education Class.

8. Pre-Filing Attendance

Parties will be permitted to attend the Parent Education Class prior to filing, if they desire.

9. Failure to Attend

Each Family Court Judge may impose appropriate sanctions if a party fails to attend the Parent Education Class, including dismissal of the petition or motion or striking of the pleadings.

10. Proof of Compliance

Parties attending the program shall submit their Certification of Attendance at the time of the submission of a Judgment in a non-contested matter or on the first day of a contested hearing. Such proof of compliance shall be submitted along with the Judgment or on the first day of a contested hearing, even if previously filed.

11. Location

The class shall be offered at multiple locations that are accessible to participants in each of the following areas of St. Louis County: north, south, central west and far west. Classes shall be offered at each location according to the demand for such classes and with sufficient frequency so as to be convenient for all participants.

The facilities in which classes are held shall be clearly signed, easy to locate, have ample parking to accommodate class participants, and comply with all federal Americans with Disabilities Act regulations. The room in which the classes are held shall be large enough to accommodate up to twenty-five participants comfortably plus trainer and equipment. Restrooms and drinking fountains should also be conveniently

located. At least one of the facilities shall be easily accessible by public transportation.

12. Class Time

Classes shall be offered at different times throughout the week, class time to be determined by the availability of the participants. The Contractor, at a minimum, will have daytime, evening classes and weekend classes available.

The schedule of classes may be changed with two weeks advance notice, should a need be demonstrated. Permission from the Family Court shall be obtained for all scheduling changes.

13. Number of Classes/Class Size

It is estimated that at least 2,800 participants will be mandated to attend class during one calendar year. This number may vary depending on attendance rates and the volume of petitions and motions.

The Contractor shall demonstrate the capability to conduct as many as one hundred classes or more per year, or a sufficient number of classes to accommodate the volume of participants. Participants must be offered a class time within ten days of the call to the Contractor. The size of any one class cannot exceed 25 participants.

14. Payment

The Contractor will collect a fee of \$50.00 from each participant which constitutes payment for all services provided. The Contractor will provide classes at no cost to the participant, if a participant has been allowed by the court to proceed *in forma pauperis* or if the participant has been approved for no fee by the Manager of the Domestic Relations Services or a designee following a review of his or her financial circumstances. The Contractor shall refer participants who express concern regarding ability to pay to the Manager of Domestic Relations Service or a designee for a financial review. The Contractor shall be responsible for all collection of fees. The Contractor shall submit to the Family Court Administrator or a designee a monthly and annual accounting of fees collected and expenses associated with the program.

15. Scheduling

The Circuit Clerk's Office, and/or the attorneys for the parties, shall provide the participants with the name and phone number of the Contractor. Participants are required to contact the Contractor to schedule classes.

The Contractor shall be responsible for scheduling participants for sessions and for providing information about classes to participants. Sufficient clerical staff, office space, equipment and phone lines shall be allocated by the Contractor for this purpose. It is estimated that the Contractor will schedule up to 100 participants per week. The Contractor will mail a letter describing the class and a map to the facility to each participant. All costs associated with scheduling, mailings and providing classes will be assumed by the Contractor.

Each participant will need to provide the Contractor with essential case information such as the cause number and identifying information (address, phone number, name of the other party, etc.).

16. Record Keeping/Certificates

The Contractor will maintain a data base consisting of information on participants. This data base shall

consist of identifying information, cause number, class attendance records and any other information about participants that is requested by the Court. The Contractor will produce and deliver the attendance certificates to the Circuit Clerk's Office within two working days of each class. The attendance certificates will be in triplicate, with one copy to the Circuit Clerk, one copy to the participant, and one copy retained by the Contractor. The Contractor will also produce and deliver other summary reports as requested by the Family Court.

The Contractor will be responsible for all data entry, programming and report production. Reports and certificates of attendance will be delivered in a timely manner within time frames specified by the Family Court. The Contractor will compile data from the evaluation surveys, with monthly reports being provided to the Family Court Administrator or a designee. The Contractor shall be prepared to provide to St. Louis County upon request all program and financial records related to program activity.

The Contractor is required to keep a computer data base exportable in Microsoft Excel format and shall make the data base available to the Court. The Contractor shall collect data as specified by the Family Court. Upon request, the Contractor shall provide layouts of the data base to the Family Court.

17. Equipment, Video and Facility

The Contractor will provide all equipment required for the classes including tables, chairs, television and stand, VCR and Parent Education video. The video to be used will be selected and provided by the Family Court. The Contractor will be responsible for securing facilities and for all preparation and finalization of facility set up.

18. Security

The Contractor will be responsible for developing and implementing a security plan that protects the safety of participants. To be considered in this plan are potential threats to safety presented by the surrounding environment, building access, non-participants, as well as other participants. Contractor shall plan for security, including other staff available to assist should a security problem arise. Divorcing parents will be scheduled separately. Schedulers will be trained to protect the privacy of participants. (i.e., not providing information about a participant or the participant's scheduled class to anyone except the Court).

19. Instructor

The Contractor shall provide a qualified instructor for each class. This instructor shall have a Bachelor or Master's Degree in social work, psychology, education or a comparable field and a minimum of three years experience in either working with divorcing parents, family counseling, marital and divorce therapy or a substantially related field.

The instructor(s) shall have prior experience dealing with people from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Family Court reserves the right to attend classes without prior notice for the purposes of monitoring the quality of the program and presentation. It is the Court's intent to establish and maintain a cooperative, collaborative relationship with the Contractor to insure a quality program. The instructor(s) shall have strong presentation skills, a good knowledge of divorce dynamics and their effects on children. All instructors must be approved by the Family Court Administrator or designee. The Family Court reserves the right to require a replacement instructor based on inadequate knowledge, skills, abilities, or performance in conducting the Parent Education Class.



20. Printed Materials

The Contractor, in concert with the Family Court, shall prepare a booklet, with the booklets to be distributed to class participants. Booklet(s) shall be professionally printed on high quality paper and shall provide helpful information to divorcing parents on how to help their children through the divorce/separation process. The full cost of printing, including paper, set up, and collating these booklet(s) shall be assumed by Contractor. The booklet could include such topics as:

Children's Development Needs  
Age of Child and Reaction to Divorce  
Do's and Don'ts to Assist Your Child through the Divorce Process  
Stages of Grief and/or other useful information

The Contractor shall prepare, print, and distribute to each participant a list of community resources for divorcing/separating families. The Family Court may provide additional information and publications for distribution.

21. Monitoring

The Family Court reserves the right to monitor all aspects of the Parent Education Program.

22. Business Solicitation

The Contractor may offer other services or programs to participants. However the Contractor may not require program participants to participate in any other services offered by the Contractor's agency and/or individual practice.

23. Compliance with Regulations, Policies and Procedures

The Contractor shall comply with all municipal, state and federal regulations, including all regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Contractor shall also comply with all procedures and policies established by the Family Court governing the operation of the Parent Education Program and shall enter into a contractual agreement with the Family Court of St. Louis County in a format approved by the Family Court. A *pro Forma* copy of the agreement is attached hereto.

24. Bid Evaluation Procedure

The Bid will be awarded to the most responsible and qualified bidder.

All bids will be evaluated by the team comprised of representatives of the St. Louis County Family Court.

St. Louis County Family Court will consider the ability, capacity or skill of the bidder to perform the contract or provide the service required; whether the bidder can perform the contract or provide the service promptly, within the time specified, and without delay or interference; the character, integrity, reputation, judgment, experience and efficiency of the bidder and his employees; the quality of performance of previous contracts or services; the sufficiency of the financial resources to provide required services. St. Louis County Family Court will consider the Response Submission information submitted in accordance with Paragraph 25. The St. Louis County Family Court shall make whatever investigation deemed necessary in the evaluation of the bids. Bidders are to respond to all Family Court requests for clarification of bid information or additional information within five (5) calendar days of notification by the Family Court Administrator or designee.

25. Response Submission Information

Potential Contractor shall include the following information:

- A. Rationale as to why the agency submitting the proposal is suited to provide the service including how this program fits with the mission of the applicant agency.
  - B. A description of the prospective class locations including type of facility, surrounding area, room size, accessibility and other pertinent information.
  - C. A description of how the Contractor would accommodate the requirements of scheduling, training and reporting. This would include information relating to additional clerical or consulting staff needed, a description of facilities and equipment including office space, phone system, computer and other necessary equipment.
  - D. Description of qualified instructors including resumes. If instructors have not been selected, a description of how a qualified instructor would be selected.
  - E. The proposed procedures to protect the safety of participants, including security features of the building and/or security personnel that would be provided.
  - F. Samples of printed material demonstrating the quality of and the substantive information of the materials to be distributed to the Parent Education Class.
26. The Contractor must respond by submitting all information as a part of the bid to the St. Louis County Family Court Business Office (105 S. Central Ave, Clayton, MO 63105) Attention: Marshall Day. Failure to submit such data shall be deemed sufficient cause for disqualification from further consideration.