

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

FAMILY COURT ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGE ORDER NO. 212

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 (“RSMo.”);

WHEREAS, the Honorable Jason D. Dodson has been appointed Administrative Judge of the Family Court of St. Louis County pursuant to Section 487.010.3, RSMo.;

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, March 1, 2009, and August 1, 2017 and October 29, 2019.

WHEREAS, Sections 452.600 through 452.610 RSMo. mandate the establishment of educational sessions programs in proceedings involving custody or support by local court rule.

NOW THEREFORE IT IS ORDERED that, effective January 1, 2023, Family Court Administrative Order No. 40A and all of its amendments are hereby rescinded and withdrawn and are null and void *ab initio*. In their place, this Family Court Administrative Order shall control the administration of the Parent Education Program

in St. Louis County Family Court as set forth by the foregoing applicable statutes and Local Court Rule 68.4.2.

The goals of the Parent Education Program are as follows: 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.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Parent Education 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

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a Notice of Mandatory Parent Education Classes ("Notice") shall be available from the Office of the Circuit Clerk and the Domestic Relations Services Office. A copy of the Notice shall 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 18 is involved as provided herein:

To Filing Party, Filing Party's Attorney or, if Filing Party is unrepresented, the Office of the Circuit Clerk, shall provide a copy of the Notice to Filing Party.

To Responding Party, Responding Party's Attorney, or if Responding Party 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 Responding Party. If the Responding Party files a voluntary entry of appearance and waiver of service of summons, Responding Party's attorney, or if Responding Party is unrepresented, Filing Party's attorney shall provide a copy of the Notice to Responding Party.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all parties are required to attend the Parent Education Class, whether online or in person. The Filing Party is required to complete the Parent Education Class prior to the disposition of the case and no later than 120 days from the date of filing. The Responding Party is required to complete the class prior to the disposition of the case and no later than 120 days after the date of service or the filing of a voluntary entry of appearance.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that default by the Responding Party shall not excuse Filing Party's completion of the Parent Education Class.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that parties may complete the Parent Education Class prior to filing, if they desire.

IT IS FURTHER ORDER that the Court may impose appropriate sanctions

if a party fails to complete the Parent Education Class including, but not limited to, dismissal of the petition or motion or the striking of pleadings.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that parties attending the program shall submit their Certification of Completion at or before the time of the submission of a Judgment in a non-contested matter or on or before the first day of a contested hearing.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all Parent Education Program classes must be approved by the Court by and through the Family Court Administrator. All approved program providers will be placed on an "Approved Parent Education Programs" list. Said list shall be published on the Court's website. The Court will only accept Certificates of Completion from litigants who have completed classes sponsored by programs the Family Court Administrator approves. The Circuit Clerk's Office, and/or attorneys for the parties, shall provide the participants with the contact information of the court-approved program providers. Providers shall comply with all municipal, state and federal regulations.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that fees or costs of the Parent Education Class shall be less than seventy-five dollars (\$75.00), pursuant to Section 452.610, RSMo.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that providers shall 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 Director of Domestic Relations Services or a designee following a review of his/her financial circumstances.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Circuit Clerk provide notice of this Family Court Administrative Order by causing it 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:



---

Jason D. Dodson  
Family Court Administrative Judge

Entered this 20th day of December, 2022.