

**IN THE COURTS OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA**

Administrative Order No. 2011-39

(Vacates Administrative Order 2007-28)

**IN RE: FAMILY LAW
PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSE**

ORDER

WHEREAS, effective July 1, 2003, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) was designated the responsibility of approving all parent education and family stabilization courses for divorcing parents pursuant to Section 61.21, Florida Statutes; it is

ORDERED that:

1. The Department of Children and Families shall provide to the First Judicial Circuit an approved list of providers as well as sites where the courses will be delivered. Each course must meet the minimum curriculum standards for parenting courses in the State of Florida. The Clerk of the Court, Family Law Division, in each county in the First Circuit shall keep a current list of DCF-approved courses and make it available to all parties to domestic relations cases.
2. This order applies to all parties in the following case situations: dissolution of marriage proceedings with minor children, paternity actions that involve issues of parental responsibility, and any other domestic relations action when so ordered by the Court.
3. **All parties who are required to attend the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course must successfully complete one of the DCF-approved courses, either in person, by correspondence, or on-line, at their own expense, unless the Court has granted a request to attend an alternative course.**
4. **Parties with special circumstances must obtain approval from the Court prior to taking an alternative course.** Parties who reside outside the First Judicial Circuit but within the State of Florida may contact the Clerk of the Court in the county in which they reside for a list of DCF-approved course providers.
5. All parties required to complete the course shall begin the course as expeditiously

as possible. The Court may excuse a party from attending the course, or from completing the course within the required time, for good cause. For dissolution of marriage actions, unless excused by the Court for good cause, the petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after the filing of the petition, and all other parties must complete the course within 45 days after service of the petition. For paternity actions, unless excused by the Court for good cause, 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 an acknowledgment 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 to a dissolution or paternity action shall file proof of compliance with the Court prior to the entry of the final judgment.

6. Upon a party's unexcused failure to successfully complete the course, the assigned judge may take appropriate action, including but not limited to an action for contempt or the denial of shared parental responsibility or time-sharing.

DONE AND ORDERED, in Chambers at Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida, this the _____ day of August, 2011.

_____/S/ TERRY D. TERRELL_____
TERRY D. TERRELL
CHIEF JUDGE

Conformed copies to:

All Judges, First Judicial Circuit

All Clerks, First Judicial Circuit

Robin Wright, Trial Court Administrator

Janet Gilbert, Senior Deputy Court Administrator

Department of Children and Families

Summation, Escambia/Santa Rosa Bar Assn.