

IN THE OGEECHEE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
STATE OF GEORGIA

2002 MAR 21 AM 11 08

BULLOCH)
JENKINS)
SCREVEN COUNTIES)

BOOK _____ PAGE _____
JANIS B. REDDICK
CLERK OF COURT
SCREVEN COUNTY, GA.

IN RE: SEMINAR FOR DIVORCING PARENTS

ORDER

Pursuant to the inherent powers of this Court and in order to provide for the speedy, efficient and inexpensive resolution of disputes it is hereby ordered:

Section 1: This order applies to all parties with minor children (under the age of 18) in all divorces, separate maintenance, paternity, change of custody, child support, visitation, legitimation and other domestic relations actions as may be otherwise ordered by the Court, excluding domestic violence actions brought under the Family Violence Act, U.R.E.S.A. cases, uncontested visitation modifications, and uncontested child support modifications. This order applies to the actions as stated above filed on or after April 1, 2002.

Section 2: It is hereby ordered that all parties shall successfully complete the program entitled "Seminar for Divorcing Parents." This four-hour educational seminar focuses on the developmental needs of children, with emphasis on fostering the child's emotional health during periods of stress. The program is informative, supportive and directs people desiring additional information or help to appropriate resources. Topics covered include: 1) developmental stages of childhood; 2) reaction of children to divorce generally and at specific ages; 3) how divorce affects families; 4) grief processes and coping skills; 5) roles of divorced parents; 6) co-parenting skills; 7) financial obligations of parents; and 8) mediation as a tool to resolve domestic disputes.

Section 3: Attendance is required of all parties to a case where the interests of children under the age of 18 are involved. The seminar must be successfully completed within 31 days of service of the original complaint upon the defendant, **except in those cases filed in April of 2002, the parties have 60 days of service of the original complaint upon the defendant successfully to complete the seminar.** No hearings, unless emergency in nature, nor mediation will be scheduled unless both parties present proof of attendance. However, the Court's action on a petition will not be delayed by a non-moving or responding party's refusal or delay in completing the seminar. Upon a party's failure to complete the seminar pursuant to the Order, the assigned Judge may take appropriate action, including but not limited to actions for contempt.

Section 4: Participants will pay a fee of \$35.00, due at the beginning of each seminar, to cover the total cost of the seminar including the presenter's fee, handouts, application and program

administration. The fee may be waived if a party presents a verified affidavit of poverty and it appears upon investigation that the party otherwise meets the Court's guidelines of indigency. The Exchange Club Family Skills Center will administer the seminar using qualified counselors, educators, and trainers.

Section 5: A service of equal value may be substituted for the seminar if written verification satisfactory to the Court is provided to the Court by a third party indicating that the specific issues noted above have been addressed in another forum through professional or pastoral counseling, or another similar educational program. Parties may attend any four hour Superior Court approved parenting seminar in the State of Georgia and, upon proof of attendance, substitute attendance to this seminar. A certificate of attendance is valid for three years. Further, for good cause shown, the assigned judge may waive the requirement of this program in individual cases.


Section 6: A schedule of seminar dates may be obtained from the Clerk's office in each county, or from the Exchange Club Family Skills Center, 912-764-5325.

Section 7: Parties must attend all four hours of the seminar in order to receive credit for attendance. Upon successful completion of the seminar, the parties will be awarded a certificate of attendance to present to the judge at the time of their court appearance.


Section 8: Security will be provided at each seminar immediately prior to, during, and immediately after each session.

Effective April 1, 2002.


SO ORDERED this 7th day of March 2002.



William E. Woodrum, Jr.
Chief Judge, Superior Court
Ogeechee Judicial Circuit



John R. Turner
Judge, Superior Court
Ogeechee Judicial Circuit



F. Gates Peed
Judge, Superior Court
Ogeechee Judicial Circuit