

STANDING PRE-TRIAL ORDER
RE: REQUIRED PARENTING CLASS

Each year approximately 1,800 divorce cases are filed in Madison County. Many of those cases involve minor children. As a result, hundreds of children in Madison County suffer the trauma and stress which is inherent in the divorce of their mother and father. The effects of divorce and custody disputes upon children are well known and well documented.

Parents going through a divorce, or custody case, also undergo a stressful, traumatic experience. Given the adversarial nature of the process and the emotions and fears of their parents, the children of divorce all too often become victims. Children can be caught in an emotional tug-of-war, even when parents do their best to keep the interests of their children in the forefront. A court is required, as a matter of law and conscience, to do what is in the best interest of the children.

There are established educational programs for divorcing parents to help them see divorce through the eyes of their children, including "Transition in Parenting," which teaches parents the effects of divorce on different developmental ages, common problems facing children, visitation issues, pitfalls to avoid, and many other topics which can help a parent. The program only requires each parent to invest four hours of their time and costs approximately forty dollars.

Based upon the known effects of divorce on children, the benefits of this program, and the minimal cost to parents, the undersigned Circuit Judges find required participation in a parenting program to be in the best interest of children, whose parents are involved in divorce or custody disputes. Therefore, it is **ORDERED, ADJUDGED and DECREED** as follows:

1. Any original divorce action involving children shall be subject to this order.
2. All parties in original divorce cases which involve minor children shall be required to enroll in the Court-mandated "Transition in Parenting" seminar, or another court-approved parenting program, not later than thirty (30) days from the date of service of the summons and complaint for divorce on the defendant.
3. In a contested or uncontested divorce action, a final decree will not be entered until at least the custodial parent submits proof of the successful completion of the required parenting program. The visitation rights of the other parent will be suspended until he/she completes the required class. If the order provides for an award of joint physical custody, a final

decree will not be entered until both parents have completed the required program.

4. Relief from this order can be obtained upon proof that it would work an undue logistical hardship on a party, or that, under the facts of the case, it would not be necessary for the parents to attend this program. Insufficient time or job conflicts generally will not be considered sufficient proof, as this generally demonstrates inconvenience of the parents, not what is in the best interest of the children. The cost of the program can be waived upon application to the appropriate judge, upon a showing of extreme financial hardship and inability to pay. Forms to apply for a waiver of the cost are available in the Family Court Clerk's office.
5. A copy of this Order shall be issued in each case involving a child and is hereby adopted as the order of this Court in all such proceedings.


Entered this 1st day of October, 2012.



Karen K. Hall, Circuit Judge



William K. Bell, Circuit Judge



James P. Smith, Circuit Judge



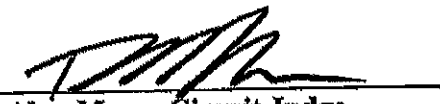
Donna Pate, Circuit Judge



Dennis E. O'Dell, Circuit Judge



Ruth Ann Hall, Circuit Judge



Alan Mann, Circuit Judge

MARRIAGES END FAMILIES DON'T

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Child Care is not provided. Children are not allowed to attend the program.

Many parents attend the same program without problems. However, it is not mandatory to attend the same class together. If you are uncomfortable attending the program with your spouse (or ex-spouse), you will be allowed to reschedule. Persons who feel a need to have individual, marital, or family counseling will be advised as to the resources available.

VERIFICATION

No one will be counted as present if they arrive 15 minutes after the start of the course or leave early. Family Services Center will provide a copy of the certificate indicating satisfactory completion of the course to you for the court Clerk's office. Another certificate of successful completion will be presented to you for your records. Attendance is taken at the start of the class and by your certificate being picked up at the completion of the class.

The course has a short break during which light refreshments are provided.

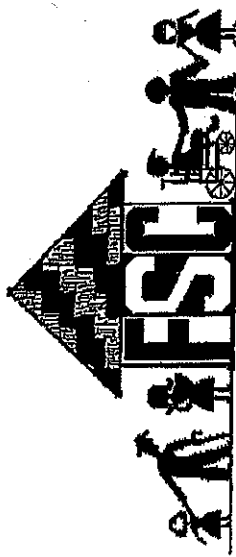
Call this number for more information:

(256) 551-1610



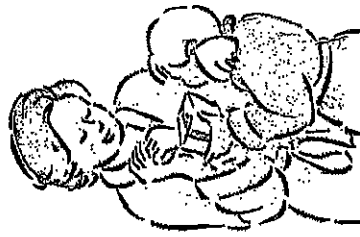
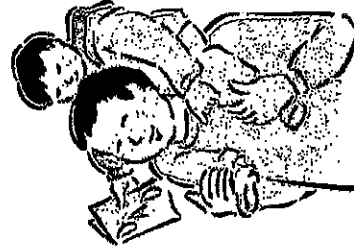
The Bill of Rights of a Child in a Divorce

1. To be told that my mother and my father still love me and will never divorce me.
2. To be told the divorce is not my fault and not to be told about the adult problems that caused it.
3. To be considered as a human being and not considered as another piece of property to be fought for, bargained over, or threatened.
4. To have decisions about me based on what is in my best interests, not on past wrongs, hurt feelings, or my parents' needs.
5. To be allowed to love both my father and my mother without being forced to choose or feel guilty.
6. To know both my father and my mother through regular and frequent involvement in my life.
7. To have the financial support of both my father and my mother.
8. To be spared hearing bad, hurtful comments about either of my parents which have no useful purpose.
9. To be a child and not to be asked to tell a lie or act as a spy or messenger.
10. To be allowed to have affection for the other people who may come into my life without being forced to choose or feel guilty.



Family Services Center

Transition in Parenting



REGISTRATION FORM

Name (as it appears on divorce papers): _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Court Case # _____

I understand I will not get credit for the class if I arrive late or leave early.

Signature _____

Enclosed is a Money Order made payable to Family Services Center. (Personal checks are not accepted for class.)

Charge my credit card:

Visa _____ MasterCard _____ Discover _____

Card # _____ Expires _____

Cardholder Name _____

Preferred class date:

Morning: _____ Evening: _____

Office use only: Paid Amount: _____ Date: _____

Cash Credit Card Money Order

By: _____

WHAT IS THE TRANSITION IN PARENTING SEMINAR?

It is a four hour educational program about the needs of children during and after the divorce of their parents. Topics include typical reactions of children, skills that help children cope, visitation issues, and pitfalls to avoid. It is not a counseling session for individual problems. Personal problems and personalities will not be discussed.

WHY DO I HAVE TO ATTEND?

Madison County Judges, who handle all divorce cases in Madison County, require all divorcing parents to complete the program. It is in the best interest of your children that you take the time to see the divorce through the eyes of your children. You will learn how to help your children through this difficult time.

WHAT IF I FAIL TO ATTEND?

The divorce will not be granted if the person who filed the suit does not attend the complete program as ordered. Visitation rights and custody will be denied to the parent against whom the suit is filed if that person fails to attend the complete program as ordered.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

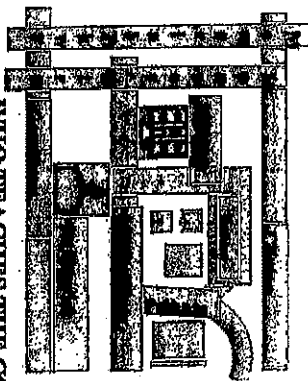
Forty five dollars (\$45) per participant. The fee may be waived if a participant presents a verified affidavit of indigency and it appears upon investigation that the participant otherwise meets the court's guidelines of indigence. This affidavit can be obtained from the judge handling your divorce.

WHEN IS THE COURSE TAUGHT?

The course takes four hours to complete. It is offered one Saturday and two Thursdays per month. Limited seating is available, so register early to avoid disappointment.

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Participants need to complete the registration form on this brochure and make payment to register for the class. Payments are taken over the telephone (551-1610) with a credit card, by mail, or in person at Family Services Center, 600 St. Clair Ave. Building 3 Huntsville, AL 35801, Open Mon.-Thurs. 8-6, Fridays 8-Noon.



WHO TEACHES THE COURSE?

Professional counselors and social workers who have experience with children and who have been specially trained to teach this course.

WHERE IS THE COURSE TAUGHT?

Classes are taught at Family Services Center (see map above). At the time of registration you will be given a choice of class times and dates. For a current class schedule call 551-1610.

SECURITY

A uniformed police officer will be present at each seminar to provide security prior to, during, and immediately after each session.