

**COURT RULES**  
**RE: EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM ON THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN**

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Section 767.401 of the Wisconsin Statutes provides that the court may order the parties to a divorce action involving a minor child to attend an educational program concerning the effects on a child of dissolution of the marriage. The parties are responsible for the cost, if any, of attendance of the program.

At the request of the court, the Director of Family Court Counseling Services has developed a program, which is outlined in the enclosed attachment. To implement this program, the following rules are hereby adopted:

1. It shall be the policy of the court to require participation in the program as a condition of the granting of a final judgment in all divorces involving a minor child.
2. The fee for the program shall be divided equally between the parties.
3. The Director of Family Court Counseling Services shall provide a Certificate of Completion to the parties upon completion of the program and payment of the fees.
4. In all cases scheduled for final hearing after September 1, 1994 – whether contested, stipulated or by default –the Certificate shall be filed with the court by the time of the final hearing.
5. All temporary orders shall include a provision providing for the participation in the program.
6. The Clerk of Court shall send a copy of these rules to counsel (or the parties in the case of *pro se* litigants) in all pending cases involving a minor child, and shall provide a copy to the petitioner when a new action is filed.

- Facilitated by:** Family Court Counseling Services Provider, Donna Jolley, MS, LCSW.
- Location:** Vernon County Sheriff’s Department Training Room, 1320 Bad Axe Court, Viroqua, WI 54665.
- Referral:** Participants are referred by a Judge, Family Court Commissioner, Department of Human Services, or self-referral.
- Cost:** **\$36 from each parent paid not less than 48 hours prior to the scheduled class. To be paid to the Clerk of Court, 400 Courthouse Square, Suite 115, Viroqua, WI 54665.**
- Attendance:** Parents may attend the group separately. It is the duty of the attendee to notify the Court of any restraining orders that may be in place.
- Meeting Dates:** A group meets every other month on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm. Some exceptions may apply.
- Content:** Topics to be covered include the following: Stages of Loss and the Emotional Process, Legal Aspects of Co-Parenting Children, Decision Making Process, Post-Separation and Adjustment and Co-Parenting. Informative handouts for parents will be provided, along with referrals to other appropriate resources in the area.
- Confidentiality:** Information disclosed by group participants cannot be admissible in any court action or proceeding.
- Follow up:** Individuals have the opportunity to discuss follow-up with the group facilitator. This may include individual counseling, family counseling or play therapy for the child(ren).
- To Register:** Call the Vernon County Courthouse at (608) 637-5364.