

**THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**CASE NO. 14-1
(Court Administration)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 14-05
(Rescinding AO No. 98-04)**

**IN RE: REQUIREMENT TO COMPLETE
A PARENTING EDUCATION AND
FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSE**

WHEREAS, pursuant to Administrative Order No. 98-04 ("AO 98-04"), certain standards were established within the Eleventh Judicial Circuit for parties to attend a parenting course prior to obtaining a Final Judgment or Post-Judgment Final Order in any proceeding involving a dissolution of marriage matter with minor children or a modification of a final judgment action involving parental responsibilities, custody, or visitation; and

WHEREAS, since the enactment of AO 98-04, it has been determined that the Circuit's requirement for parties to attend a Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course ("Parenting Course") shall be revised to comply with section 61.21, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, section 61.21, Florida Statutes, designates the Department of Children and Family Services to approve a Parenting Course for parents to attend who are separating or divorcing;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, under Rule 2.215 of Judicial Administration, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

1. All parties to a dissolution of marriage proceeding with minor children or a paternity action that involves issues of parental responsibility shall be required to complete the parenting course prior to the entry of a final judgment by the Court.
2. All parties to a modification of a final judgment involving a parenting plan or a time-sharing schedule may be required to complete a Parenting Course prior to the entry of an order modifying the final judgment.
3. In accordance with section 61.21, Florida Statutes, course providers offering a Parenting Course may charge a fee to each party attending the course.
4. All parties are required to begin a Parenting Course as expeditiously as possible, specifically:

(a) Dissolution of marriage actions with minor children

- (1) Unless excused by the Court, the Petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after the filing of the petition.
- (2) All other parties must complete the course within 45 days after service of the petition.

(b) Paternity actions

- (1) Unless excused by the Court, the Petitioner must complete the course within 45 days after the filing of the petition.
 - (2) Any other party must complete the course within 45 days after an acknowledgment of paternity by the party, an adjudication of paternity of the party, or an order granting time-sharing to or support from the party.
5. Prior to the entry of the final judgment, all parties are required to file proof of compliance of completion of the Parenting Course with the Clerk of the Court.
 6. The Court may excuse a party from attending the Parenting Course, or from completing the Parenting Course within the required time, for good cause shown.
 7. The Court may hold any parent who fails to attend a required Parenting Course in contempt, or that parent may be denied shared parental responsibility or time-sharing, or otherwise sanctioned as the Court deems appropriate.
 8. The Court may, without motion of either party, prohibit the parties from taking the Parenting Course together, if there is a history of domestic violence between the parties.

Administrative Order No. 98-04 is hereby rescinded in its entirety and shall be held for naught.

This Administrative Order shall become effective immediately upon execution.

DONE AND ORDERED in Chambers at Miami-Dade County, Florida, this 14th day of March, 2014.

**BERTILA SOTO, CHIEF JUDGE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**