

## **Mandated Parent Education Seminars**

### **Understanding the Virginia Code Requirements: Sections [16.1-278.15](#) and [20-103](#)**

#### **Who must attend?**

The parties to any petition where a child whose custody, visitation, or support is contested. Parties under this section shall include natural or adoptive parents of the child, or any person with a legitimate interest as defined in Section [20-124.1](#), (including, but not limited to, grandparents, stepparents, former stepparents, blood relatives and family members).

#### **When must I attend?**

Parties shall show proof that they have attended within the 12 months prior to their court appearance or that they shall attend within 45 days thereafter.

#### **What must I attend?**

An educational seminar or other like program that is a minimum of four hours in length. The seminar will address the effects of separation or divorce on children, parenting responsibilities, options for conflict resolution and financial responsibilities.

#### **Given by whom?**

Conducted by a qualified person or organization approved by the court [qualified providers serving each judicial circuit are listed on this website].

#### **How much will I have to pay?**

The fee charged a party for participation in such program shall be based on the parties' ability to pay; however, no fee in excess of \$50.00 may be charged.

#### **What if I decide to go to mediation?**

Whenever possible, before participating in mediation or alternative dispute resolution to address custody, visitation or support, each party shall have attended the educational seminar or other like program.

#### **Will comments I make or questions I ask be admissible in court?**

Other than statements or admissions by a party admitting criminal activity or child abuse or neglect, no statement or admission by a party made during a seminar or program shall be admissible into evidence in any subsequent proceeding.