

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.