

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0240

Divorce proceedings-parenting classes.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Iekel and Warren and
Senator(s) Devin and Sessions

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to child custody and visitation resulting
2 from divorce proceedings; modifying and expanding parent
3 education participation; imposing conditions and
4 requirements; providing for exemptions; and providing for
5 an effective date.

6

7 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

8

9 **Section 1.** W.S. 20-2-201(f) and by creating a new
10 subsection (g) is amended to read:

11

12 **20-2-201. Disposition and maintenance of children in**
13 **decree or order; access to records; required parent**
14 **education program participation.**

15

1 (f) ~~At any time the court may require parents to~~
2 ~~attend appropriate parenting classes, including but not~~
3 ~~limited to, parenting classes to lessen the effects of~~
4 ~~divorce on children~~ Unless an exemption is granted under
5 subsection (g) of this section, after filing an action or a
6 proceeding for divorce, separation or annulment of a
7 marriage, child support, the modification or enforcement of
8 visitation or custody of a child or for the establishment
9 of paternity pursuant to W.S. 14-2-101 through 14-2-120,
10 the court shall in the best interests of the children,
11 order both parties to attend a parent education program.
12 Information pertaining to any party obtained as a result of
13 participation in a program under this subsection shall not
14 be disclosed by any program provider. In addition, any
15 program instructor shall not be subpoenaed or summoned as a
16 witness in proceedings involving matters specified under
17 this section. Any party failing to comply with this
18 subsection may be held in contempt. The parent education
19 program shall:

20
21 (i) Be a minimum of four (4) hours of
22 instruction;

23
24 (ii) Be certified and approved in accordance

1 with minimum standards adopted by each judicial district
2 and provided by a public or private institution or entity;

3
4 (iii) At minimum, provide instruction in the
5 following areas which informs both parties on the divorce
6 process and its impact upon children and instructs the
7 parties in parenting skills and strategies to enable the
8 parties to parent children in a cooperative manner:

9
10 (A) Developmental stages of children;

11
12 (B) Adjustment of children to parental
13 separation;

14
15 (C) Negative effects of access denial;

16
17 (D) Domestic violence;

18
19 (E) Options for dispute resolution and
20 conflict management;

21
22 (F) Financial responsibilities to the
23 children;

24

1 (G) Appropriate cooperative parenting;

2

3 (H) Custody, parenting time and shared
4 parenting plans;

5

6 (J) Long distance parenting.

7

8 (iv) Be completed by each party within sixty
9 (60) days following the date of the court's order;

10

11 (v) Be the responsibility of each party to
12 arrange for participation and for payment of costs approved
13 by the court, which shall be a graduated fee based upon
14 wealth;

15

16 (vi) Not require both parties to attend or
17 receive instruction at the same time;

18

19 (vii) Be completed prior to a final decree or
20 entry of an order by the court. Each party shall file
21 certification of completion with the court.

22

23 (g) An exemption from the parent education program
24 required under subsection (f) of this section may be

1 granted by the court following completion of an exception
2 affidavit in accordance with this subsection. The
3 affidavit may be obtained from the clerk of court and may
4 be submitted at any time. The affidavit shall state and
5 attendance may be waived for one (1) of the following:

6
7 (i) A party is incarcerated;

8
9 (ii) A party has previously attended a parent
10 education program complying with subsection (g) of this
11 section;

12
13 (iii) An action has been filed by a governmental
14 agency to enforce or modify an existing child support
15 order; or

16
17 (iv) Other circumstances identified by the court
18 including domestic violence, transportation or child care.

19
20 **Section 2.** This act is effective July 1, 2003.

21
22 (END)