

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0196

Divorce actions-parenting classes.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Iekel, Alden, Berger, Gay  
and Warren and Senator(s) Burns and Massie

A BILL

for

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

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

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9 **Section 1.** W.S. 20-2-201(f) and by creating new  
10 subsections (g) and (h) and 20-2-204 by creating a new  
11 subsection (d) are amended to read:

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13 **20-2-201. Disposition and maintenance of children in**  
14 **decree or order; access to records.**

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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.~~ In an action for dissolution of  
5 marriage, legal separation or annulment that involves  
6 biological or adopted children of the parties, the court  
7 shall order both parties to attend a parent education  
8 program in the best interests of the children, unless an  
9 exemption is granted under subsection (g) of this section.

10 The parent education program shall:

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12           (i) Be a minimum of four (4) hours of  
13 instruction;

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15           (ii) Be provided by a public or private  
16 institution or entity and be presented by at least one (1)  
17 presenter who possesses a graduate degree from an  
18 accredited college or university in child development,  
19 family life education, marriage and family therapy, social  
20 work, counseling psychology or a closely related field, or  
21 by a presenter with a bachelor's degree with at least five  
22 (5) years training in family systems and the developmental  
23 stages of children. Any institution or entity providing a  
24 parent education program under this subsection shall

1 demonstrate proof of continuing professional liability  
2 insurance and shall maintain records for all participants  
3 of a program for a minimum of five (5) years;

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

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11 (A) Developmental stages of children;

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13 (B) Adjustment of children to parental  
14 separation;

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16 (C) Negative effects of access denial;

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18 (D) Domestic violence;

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

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23 (F) Financial responsibilities to the  
24 children;

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(G) Cooperative parenting, including when cooperative parenting is not appropriate and, when appropriate, other options to cooperative parenting;

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

(J) Long distance parenting;

(K) Resources available in the community to obtain additional services;

(M) Basic information regarding domestic relations court procedures, however the course shall not provide legal advice or counsel.

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

(v) Provide a certificate of completion to the participant that includes at a minimum the date of attendance, participant's name and the name, address and phone number of the provider;

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(vi) Be responsible for collection of fees from any person ordered to participate except that no person may be excluded from the program for inability to pay the fee. The service provider shall provide a fee schedule with provisions allowing all persons who are indigent or unable to pay to participate in the program;

(vii) Ensure the safety and confidentiality of all participants and presenters of the program and not require both parties to attend the program at the same time.

(g) The court may waive the attendance requirement under subsection (f) of this section on its own motion or on the motion of one (1) of the parties if the court determines that course attendance and completion are not:

(i) Necessary;

(ii) Appropriate;

(iii) Feasible; or

1           (iv) In the best interests of the parties and  
2 the children.

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4           (h) All reports, findings, proceedings and data of a  
5 parent education program are confidential and privileged  
6 and are not subject to introduction into evidence in any  
7 civil action as to any statements made during the  
8 educational course or as to any findings, recommendations,  
9 evaluations, opinions or other actions of the parent  
10 education program. However, information, documents or  
11 other records otherwise available from the original sources  
12 shall not be construed as immune from discovery or use in a  
13 civil action merely because they were disclosed during a  
14 parent education program. No person who attends a parent  
15 education program shall be prevented from testifying to  
16 matters otherwise within his knowledge.

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18           **20-2-204. Enforcement and modification.**

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20           (d) A court having jurisdiction under W.S. 20-2-203  
21 may require either or both of the parties to attend a  
22 parent education program as provided in W.S. 20-1-201.

1       **Section 2.** This act is effective July 1, 2005.

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(END)