

SENATE FILE NO. SF0130

Divorce actions-parenting classes.

Sponsored by: Senator(s) Sessions, Geis and Massie and
Representative(s) Alden, Berger, Iekel and
Warren

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) through (j) 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 (h) of this section.
10 The court approved 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 and at least three
22 (3) years in a previously stated field experience with
23 never married and separative families. Each presenter
24 shall have experience working in areas of domestic

1 relations, family restructuring, child welfare, family
2 dynamics and training in domestic violence issues. Any
3 institution or entity providing a parent education program
4 under this subsection shall demonstrate proof of continuing
5 professional liability insurance and shall maintain records
6 for all participants of a program for a minimum of five (5)
7 years;

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9 (iii) At minimum, provide instruction in the
10 following areas which informs both parties concerning the
11 divorce process and its impact upon children and instructs
12 the parties in parenting skills and strategies to enable
13 the parties to parent children in a responsible manner:

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15 (A) Developmental stages of children;

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17 (B) Adjustment of children to parental
18 separation;

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20 (C) Negative effects of access denial;

21
22 (D) Domestic violence;

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1 (E) Options for dispute resolution and
2 conflict management;

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4 (F) Financial responsibilities to the
5 children;

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

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

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14 (J) Long distance parenting;

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

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19 (M) Basic information regarding domestic
20 relations court procedures, however the course shall not
21 provide legal advice or therapeutic intervention.

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23 (iv) Be completed by each party within ninety
24 (90) days following the date of the court's order;

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(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;

(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) Providers shall comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act to enable persons with disabilities to participate in the program.

(h) The court may waive the attendance requirement under subsection (f) of this section on its own motion or

1 on the motion of one (1) of the parties if the court
2 determines that course attendance and completion are not:

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4 (i) Necessary;

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6 (ii) Appropriate;

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8 (iii) Feasible; or

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10 (iv) In the best interests of the parties and
11 the children.

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13 (j) All reports, findings, proceedings and data of a
14 parent education program are confidential and privileged
15 and are not subject to introduction into evidence in any
16 civil action as to any statements made during the
17 educational course or as to any findings, recommendations,
18 evaluations, opinions or other actions of the parent
19 education program. However, information, documents or
20 other records otherwise available from the original sources
21 shall not be construed as immune from discovery or use in a
22 civil action merely because they were disclosed during a
23 parent education program. No person who attends a parent

1 education program shall be prevented from testifying to
2 matters otherwise within his knowledge.

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4 **20-2-204. Enforcement and modification.**

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

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10 **Section 2.** This act is effective July 1, 2007.

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(END)