

RULE NO. 17  
MANDATORY PARENTING SEMINARS

I. Applicable Cases

- A. This rule shall apply to all cases filed after April 1, 1997 under Ch.26.09, Ch.26.10, or Ch.26.26 RCW which require a parenting plan or residential plan for minor children, including dissolution's, legal separations, major modifications, paternity actions in which paternity has been established, and non-parental custody actions.

II. Mandatory Attendance

- A. In all cases governed by this rule, all parties shall complete a parenting seminar approved by the Court. Standards for parenting seminars shall be established by the Court and providers shall be approved by the Court.

III. Timing

- A. Parties required by this rule to participate in parenting seminars shall complete an approved parenting seminar within 90 days after service of the petition or motion initiating the action which is subject to this rule. In the case of paternity actions initiated by the prosecuting attorney's office, the parenting seminar shall be required only when paternity has been established or acknowledged and a parenting plan is requested. The seminar will be completed prior to the entry of a permanent parenting or residential plan.
- B. Upon completion of the parenting seminar, the seminar provider shall file a certificate of completion with the Clerk of the Court.

IV. Fees

- A. Each party attending a seminar shall pay a fee charged by the approved provider and sanctioned by the Court. The Court may waive the fee for indigent parties.

V. Special Consideration/Waivers

- A. In no case shall opposing parties be required to attend a seminar together.
- B. If the Court determines that attendance at a seminar is not in the children's best interest, pursuant to Ch.26.12 RCW, the Court shall either:
1. Waive the requirement of completion of the seminar; or
  2. Allow participation in an alternative parenting seminar, if available.
- C. The Court may waive the seminar requirement or extend the time for attendance of the seminar for good cause shown.

VI. Service on Parties

- A. The Clerk of the Court shall provide a copy of this rule to the initiating party for service upon all parties against whom relief is sought, together with a statement describing the program including contact telephone numbers, addresses, statement of costs, and an explanation of how to request a waiver or referral of the program registration fee.

VII. Failure to Comply

- A. Willful refusal to participate in a parenting seminar or willful delay in completion of a parenting seminar by any party will constitute contempt of court and may result in sanctions, including but not limited to, imposition of monetary terms, striking of pleadings, or denial of affirmative relief to a party not in compliance with this rule.

(Adopted effective September 1, 1997)

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