

Court Sponsored Parent Education Programs

It has become a fact of life that an estimated half of all first marriages will end in divorce and approximately 60 percent of those divorces will involve children. Children often feel placed in the middle of loyalty contests, communication difficulties, disagreement about money and other unresolved parental issues. Children are experiencing a great number of problems associated with the break-up of their families. Some of these problems include difficulties in school, substance abuse, depression, and juvenile crime.

The solutions to these problems are diverse. One option is the use of educational interventions. Presently, there is a Supreme Court Order requiring parents to attend educational programs which address the issues of effects of divorce on children. In Mohave County, the Superior Court has Parent Information Classes available through the Conciliation Court Services. The class presenters are highly qualified professionals with Master's Degree in the areas of Counseling and Psychology. Additionally, the class presenter's are specially trained Family Mediators who will outline the purpose of mediation as it relates to child custody and parenting time issues.

Typically, parent information programs include materials which motivate parents to become sensitive to the reactions and needs of their children and train them how to make changes that will protect their children from stress and damage. Other programs report that although parents may resent being required to attend the class, they report quite favorably upon completion of the class. In addition to assisting families to cope with the changes divorce brings about, there has also been a decrease in re-litigation rates. Other effects observed include more positive attitudes of parents as well as their increased sensitivity to their children.

It is our hope that the Parent Information classes will improve the lives of both parents and children for the immediate future and over the long course. Good luck to all of you as you go through this transition in your family.

The Conciliation Court Services Staff