



Georgia Court Mandated Programs in Domestic Relations Cases -fetched 24 November, 2013

[http://www.georgiacourts.gov/files/UNIFORM%20SUPERIOR%20COURT%20RULES\\_Updated\\_01\\_22\\_13\\_.pdf](http://www.georgiacourts.gov/files/UNIFORM%20SUPERIOR%20COURT%20RULES_Updated_01_22_13_.pdf)  
Rule 24.8

(A) There may be established by any superior court circuit a program designed to educate the parties to domestic relations actions in regard to the effects of divorce on minor children of the marriage. Establishment of the program shall be by majority vote of the judges of the circuit or by the chief judge, in the event of a tie vote by all judges.

(B) The superior court judges, under whose authority the program shall function, **may require any or all parties to attend an educational seminar of no more than four hours in any domestic relations action before the court.** The program may be administered by the court or by contract with a private agency. The seminar shall be conducted by qualified personnel whose professional and educational experiences include a knowledge of children and families.

(C) The seminar shall focus on the effects of divorce on children, specifically as it relates to the parents' actions during and after the separation, and as it relates to the children at different developmental stages. Specific attention should be given to the effects of the economics of divorce on children

(D) The court or contracted agency may charge each participant a fee, provided there is a fee waiver procedure in cases of indigent parties. The fee may be assessed in addition to court costs against either party in the discretion of the judge. The program shall be non profit.

(E) The mandate of attendance shall be by court order with the assigned judge retaining the discretion to waive attendance for good cause shown. Such good cause may include: a party's non residence in Georgia or in the county in which the action is pending or the reasonable availability of a similar program to the party or other such reasonable causes which indicate to the court that a party should not be required to complete the program. The court may, in its discretion, accept alternative counseling covering the subject matter of the required seminar. Unless waived, the failure to successfully complete the seminar shall be cause for appropriate action by the assigned judge, including but not limited to, withholding the final decree of divorce, attachment for contempt and award of attorneys' fees and costs.

(F) The assigned judge may, as a discretionary matter, grant a final decree of divorce completion of the seminar, but shall retain authority to impose sanctions upon either party who fails or refuses to comply with the order to attend and complete the seminar.

(G) The various courts which have established a seminar may make reciprocal agreements which would allow a party to attend an approved out of county seminar as a substitute for attending the seminar held in the county in which the action is pending.

Rule 24.8 adopted effective May 26, 1994

<http://parentingclasses.educationprograms.com/>