

CHAPTER 65C-32
PARENT EDUCATION AND FAMILY STABILIZATION COURSE

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65C-32.001 Definitions.

(1) “Complaint” means an allegation of a violation of Sections 61.21(2)-(3), F.S., and the rules adopted pursuant to Rule Chapter 65C-32, F.A.C.

(2) “Department” means the Department of Children and Families.

(3) “Distance learning” means instruction provided through correspondence or via the Internet, pursuant to Rule 65C-32.002, F.A.C.

(4) “Evidence-based” means that the curriculum has been studied by independent researchers using sound methodology, and in peer-reviewed publications consistently found to be effective at increasing knowledge or improving parenting or child outcomes in multiple studies across a variety of populations.

(5) “Formal Course Guidebook” means a guidebook containing the background and objectives of the course, instructional methods and lesson plans, materials for distribution, and evaluation tools including educational outcomes and client satisfaction.

(6) “Indigent” means a determination of civil indigent status made by the clerk of the circuit court in which the underlying custody case is being heard.

(7) “Instructor” means the individual(s) qualified to provide instruction in a live classroom setting or answer participant questions regarding online or correspondence course content.

(8) “Letter of Non-Compliance” means a written notification advising the provider of the specified statute or rule violation(s).

(9) “Parenting Course” means the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course designated pursuant to Section 61.21(2)(a), F.S., to provide information to parents as that information relates to court actions between the parents involving parental responsibility, care, time-sharing, and support of a child or children.

(10) “Provider” means an individual or legal entity qualified to develop and implement the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course meeting the qualifications for approval pursuant to Rule Chapter 65C-32, F.A.C.

(11) “Research-informed” means that the curriculum is based on a review of research findings related to post-divorce adjustment, co-parenting and the effects of divorce on children, including abuse and neglect.

(12) “Revocation” means withdrawal of approval of a parenting course.

(13) “Verified finding” means to substantiate a complaint of non-compliance with Section 61.21, F.S., or the rules in this chapter.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21(2), (3) FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.

65C-32.002 Parenting Course Delivery.

(1) A parenting course shall be a minimum of four (4) hours of course instruction, including the time required for instruction, participant exercises and an end of course test. Online courses shall have a mechanism that prevents participants from completing the course in less than four (4) hours.

(2) The parenting course content shall include a variety of teaching methods, such as lectures, group discussions, role-plays, videotapes, or other instructional activities.

(3) Each online or correspondence provider offering a parenting course shall incorporate a means for participants to communicate with the course instructor for questions. Course content specific questions shall be answered by the instructor within one (1) business day of receiving the question.

(4) All courses shall include a means of verifying the identity of participants.

(5) The instructor of a classroom parenting course and the instructor of an online or correspondence parenting course who is designated and available to communicate with participants shall possess the following qualifications:

(a) Bachelor's degree in counseling, social work, psychology, education or related field and have at a minimum two (2) years' experience in dealing with family, parenting, and divorce related issues; or

(b) Has a minimum of four (4) years related work experience in dealing with family, parenting, and divorce-related issues.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21(2) FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.

65C-32.003 Required Components of the Parenting Course.

(1) All parenting courses developed pursuant to the requirements of Section 61.21, F.S. and Rule Chapter 65C-32, F.A.C., shall be named the "Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course." Course providers are permitted to assign a unique name to their curriculum.

(2) The provider of a parenting course shall provide to each participant a printed disclaimer in written form which states the following: "The components of the parenting course are intended for educational purposes only. The presentation of this material is not intended to constitute mental health therapy, give information on specific mental health disorders nor medications to treat mental health disorders. Participants are encouraged to discuss specific mental health questions with a licensed mental health therapist of their choice."

(3) The legal component of the parenting course shall provide general Florida family law principles. The presentation of this material is not intended to constitute legal advice and the course material must direct the participant to consult with a licensed attorney for answers to specific legal questions.

(4) The components required for the Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course in the state of Florida shall include the following:

(a) Divorce as Loss. This component shall include recognition of divorce as the loss of the current family structure and processes experienced by adults and children in working through loss. In addition, a distinction shall be made between loss of the current family structure and the continuing parental role;

(b) Permanency of Parental Role/Shared Parenting. This component shall include information about how children are positively impacted by a continuing relationship with both parents and the types of support children need from both parents;

(c) Developmental Stages of Childhood. This component shall include information on the developmental stages of childhood, as well as how a divorce may impact development, what parents can do to minimize the impact of the divorce, and when to seek additional help for a child experiencing problems;

(d) Communicating with Children in a Divorce Situation. This component shall include information about discussing divorce-related issues with children in reference to the developmental stage of the child;

(e) Communicating with the Other Parent. This component shall include the negative impact of a parent expressing anger toward the other parent in front of the children, the benefits to children of keeping them out of the middle of parental conflict, and how to establish a relationship with the other parent which shall minimize the children's exposure to parental conflict;

(f) Abuse. This component shall include information on the power and control dynamics of domestic violence and the statewide toll-free domestic violence hotline telephone number where services may be accessed. An explanation of child abuse and neglect and the statutory mandate to report such incidences to the Florida Abuse Hotline must also be included, in addition to the penalties for false reporting;

(g) Legal Concepts. This component shall include general information about Florida family law, including references to statutory definitions as they relate to court issues involving divorcing parents with minor children and financial responsibilities to the child(ren); and,

(h) Parenting Time. This component shall include information about the benefits to children of maintaining a stable and consistent relationship with both parents, suggestions about how to develop a parenting plan, and effective communication between the parents about parenting time.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21(2) FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.

65C-32.004 Parenting Course Evaluation.

(1) Each parenting course shall include an end of course test designed to demonstrate the level of comprehension of the learning objectives by the participants.

(2) Participants shall have an unlimited number of attempts to pass the end of course test.

(a) Any time a participant receives a score of less than 70% on the end of course test, the instructor shall review the missed material with the participant prior to the participant retaking the test. For online courses, missed questions shall refer the participant to the appropriate section requiring review prior to the participant retaking the test.

(b) Providers shall not require additional fees for any additional time or instruction required for participants to pass the end of course test.

(3) A certificate of completion shall be distributed to each participant who completes a four (4) hour minimum Parent Education and Family Stabilization Course and receives a score of at least 70% on the end of course test.

(a) The certificate of completion shall include the name of the course, the unique name of the curriculum, and the date the parent began the course and the date the parent finished the course.

(b) Providers must have a means of verifying certificate authenticity.

(c) Providers must maintain a list of class participants and copies of all certificates of completion issued for five (5) years.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21(2) FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.

65C-32.005 Parenting Course Approval.

(1) Each applicant seeking approval of a Parent Education and Family Stabilization course shall submit a formal course guidebook and attachments to the Department of Children and Families, Office of Child Welfare, for review.

(a) The formal course guidebook shall include:

1. Course components pursuant to Rule 65C-32.003, F.A.C.;
2. Course learning objectives;
3. All course materials, including instructor's manuals and videos;
4. Definitions of key terms. The key terms include legal and mental health terms to be introduced in the parenting course;
5. End of course test;
6. References. A list of resources to reference the source(s) of information in the course content;
7. Evaluation form. The provider may provide an evaluation form for participants upon completion of the parenting course. If an evaluation form is provided, it shall be included in the formal course guidebook; and,
8. Resource list. A list of available resources in and around the community that is furnished to each course participant.

(b) The attachments shall include:

1. Signed letter of introduction on letterhead;
2. Documentation that the curriculum is evidence-based or research-informed;
3. Resumes. The provider shall submit the resumes of all instructors. Providers shall submit to the Department a cover letter and the resume of any instructor hired after initial approval of the course. The cover letter and resume shall be submitted within seven (7) business days of hire;
4. Accessibility. For online courses, the course provider shall provide a means for the Department to access their course for the approval process;
5. Communication. Each distance learning provider shall submit to the Department its means of communicating with the participant to answer questions or interact with the participant;
6. Instructional Techniques. A list of all instructional techniques used during the presentation of the course by a provider or instructor;
7. Language. Information regarding the availability of different languages in which the course is offered;
8. Registration Information. This requirement shall include course name, address, phone number, and email address of the provider, and website address if available;
9. Amount charged to participants for taking the course; and,
10. Indigent status fees. This requirement shall include a means for indigent parents to complete their course, such as scholarships, acceptance of court waivers, and sliding fee scales if available.

(2) Currently approved parenting courses must provide proof of compliance with Rules 65C-32.003 through 65C-32.005, F.A.C., within six (6) months of the effective date of these rules. Failure to provide proof of compliance within six (6) months of the effective date of these rules shall result in revocation of course approval.

(3) Providers shall submit to the Department an updated formal course guidebook or updated attachments when any information provided to the Department for initial approval changes. An updated formal course guidebook or updated attachments shall be submitted within seven (7) business days of the change.

(4) Parenting course approval is valid for three (3) years.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21(3) FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.

65C-32.006 Parenting Course Approval Process.

(1) The approval process shall be:

(a) The Department shall notify the provider via letter or email within five (5) business days of receipt of the application packet;

(b) The Department shall review the packet within 30 business days of notification to the applicant;

(c) After a review of the packet, the Department shall notify the applicant whether the course is approved or whether additional information is needed;

(d) The applicant shall have 90 calendar days provide the additional information;

(e) If the additional information is provided within 90 calendar days, the Department shall make a final determination on approval of the course. If the additional information is not provided within 90 calendar days, the Department shall return the application packet with a letter indicating that the course is not approved.

(2) The Department shall approve all applications that meet the criteria set forth in Section 61.21(2), F.S., and Rules 65C-32.002-.005, F.A.C.

(3) The notification of Department approval shall be included in all course materials.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21(3) FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.

65C-32.007 Complaints.

(1) All complaints shall be in writing to the Department and shall include the following information:

(a) Date of the alleged violation of Section 61.21, F.S., or the rules in this chapter;

(b) Name of the parenting course;

(c) Name of the provider or lead instructor of the course; and,

(d) Basis and content of the complaint.

(2) The Department shall handle the complaints of non-compliance in the following manner:

(a) The Department shall review the rule and designate the rule violation(s) as specified in the complaint;

(b) The Department shall notify the provider of the specified alleged rule violation(s) within five (5) business days of receipt of the complaint;

(c) The provider shall have the opportunity to respond to the alleged rule violation(s) within 15 business days of the receipt of notice of the alleged rule violation; and,

(d) The Department shall determine the validity of the alleged rule violation(s) within 45 calendar days of receipt of the provider's response to the complaint.

(3) A letter of non-compliance shall be issued to the provider of the course if the complaint is founded.

(4) The provider shall have 60 calendar days after the receipt of the letter of non-compliance to come into compliance.

(5) Prior to the final action of denying or revoking approval of a course, the provider shall have the opportunity to request either a formal or informal administrative hearing to show cause as to why the action should not be taken.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21 FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.

65C-32.008 Revocation of Course Approval.

The following shall subject a parenting course to revocation of approval:

(1) A verified finding that course approval or certification was obtained by fraudulent means, such as providing documentation for approval which was based on false documentation;

(2) A verified finding that a course has been altered in any manner, such as course contents or change of course materials, that is contrary to course requirements per Section 61.21(2), F.S., or Rules 65C-32.002-.005, F.A.C.;

(3) Providing mental health therapy to participants;

- (4) Providing individual legal advice to participants;
- (5) Solicitation of participants from the sessions to become private clients or patients;
- (6) The use of the Department's past or present logo; or
- (7) Failure to comply with subsection 65C-32.005(2), F.A.C.

Rulemaking Authority 61.21(3)(e) FS. Law Implemented 61.21(3) FS. History—New 11-25-07, Amended 4-17-16.