

Vernon County Circuit Court Rules

(Seventh Judicial District)

[Educational Group for Parents Concerning the Effects of Divorce on Children](#) March 2015

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Co-Parenting & Child Development - Educational Group for Parents

Section 767.401 of the Wisconsin Statutes provides that the court may order the parties to a divorce action involving a minor child to attend an educational program concerning the effects on a child of a dissolution of marriage. The parties are responsible for the costs, if any, of attendance at the program. At the request of the court, the Director of Family Court Counseling Services has developed a program which is outlined in the attachment. To implement this program, the following rules are hereby adopted:

1. It shall be the policy of the court to require participation in the program as a condition of the granting of a final judgment in all divorces involving a minor child.
2. The fee for the program shall be divided equally between the parties.
3. The Director of Family court Counseling Services shall provide a certificate of completion to each party upon completion of the program and payment of the fees.
4. In all cases scheduled for final hearing after April 1, 2011—whether contested, stipulated or by default—the certificate shall be filed with the court by the time of the final hearing.
5. All temporary orders shall include a provision providing for participation in the program.
6. The Judicial Assistant shall send a copy of these rules to counsel (or parties in the case of pro se litigants) when a new action is filed and the respondent has been served with the summons and a petition.

Co-Parenting & Child Development - Educational Group for Parents

Separate households are a major life event not only for the parents, but also for the children. There are healthy and unhealthy ways to recover from the stress of a separation. Parents and children need support and education to cope with co-parenting. Emotional support can come from friends and family, professional counselors and from other co-parenting couples themselves. Families often need help learning how to minimize the harmful effects of separation on their children.

Facilitated By: Center Point Counseling Services, Family Court Counseling Services Provider,
Donna Jolley, MS, LCSW

Location: Center Point Counseling Services Cooperative, 210 Airport Road, Suite 103,
Viroqua, WI 54665

Referral: Participants are referred by Judge, Family Court Commissioner, Human Services, or
self-referral.

Cost: \$30.00 from each parent paid on the date of attendance

Attendance: Parents may attend the group separately. It is the duty of the attendee to notify Center
Point of any restraining order that may be in place.

Meeting Dates: A group meets on the third Wednesday of January, March, April, May, June, August, September, October and November from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Content: The 3 hour group includes the DVD, It's Still Your Choice and discussion. Topics to be covered include the following: Stages of Loss and the Emotional Process, Legal Aspects of Co-Parenting Children, Decision Making Process, Post-Separation Adjustment and Co-Parenting. Informative handouts for parents will be provided, along with referrals to other appropriate resources in the area.

Confidentiality: Information disclosed by group participants cannot be admissible in any court action or proceeding.

Follow up: Individuals have the opportunity to discuss follow up with the group facilitator. This may include individual counseling, family counseling or play therapy for the child or children. Participants should inquire at the reception desk for information about a one day educational program for children of divorce.

To register: Call Center Point Counseling Cooperative at (608) 638-7420

Dated: March 2015

Pro Se Stipulated Divorces

In a divorce case where neither party is represented by an attorney (i.e., a pro se divorce) the final hearing will not be scheduled until:

1. Each party has completed, signed and filed a standard form financial disclosure statement (each party may file a separate form or they may file a joint form);
2. The parties have reached, signed and filed a marital settlement agreement which covers all the issues of the marriage, including child custody, placement and support, maintenance (alimony), division of property and allocation of debts;
3. The parties have completed (if minor children are involved) an educational program concerning the effects on a child of a dissolution of marriage; and
4. The petitioner files proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Judgment of Divorce.

At the final hearing both parties must appear in person, or the petitioner must appear and file proof that the respondent was timely served with an Order for Appearance.

Dated: March 2015

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Local Court Rules: Small Claims Court

LCR/SC-Purpose:

1

Small claims court, as established by Chapter 799 of the Wisconsin Statutes, provides a forum for parties to resolve certain disputes expeditiously under simplified rules of evidence and procedure. Virtually all small claims cases should be resolved within 60 days of filing and with no more than two court appearances: the initial appearance on the return date and the trial, if necessary. To that end the following rules are adopted and any prior local rules in conflict with these rules are hereby repealed.

LCR/SC-Notices:

2

The clerk shall provide written notice of these rules and all court appearances to all parties and counsel of record. All notices of court appearances, shall state clearly the date, time and location of the court appearance.

LCR/SC-Scheduling:

3

Except for good cause shown, all cases will be called and heard and all scheduling will occur during the regular, monthly return date.

LCR/SC-Appeances:

4

All parties necessary to resolution of the case and counsel of record must appear in person on the return date.

LCR/SC-Alternative Dispute Resolution:

5

All contested cases will be referred to alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Volunteer mediators will be available at the courthouse on the return date. Failure to participate in ADR in good faith will result in a dismissal or a default judgment.

LCR/SC-If the case is not resolved by ADR, the defendant shall file a written answer with the

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clerk and mail a copy to the plaintiff within 10 days of the return date. Failure to comply will result in a default judgment on motion by the plaintiff.

LCR/SC-Trials:

7

On the return date all contested cases will be given a firm date for trial

LCR/SC-Motions:

8

A motion is a request for a court order. Pretrial motions may be made orally on the return date. All other motions must be submitted in writing and will be reviewed by the court prior to scheduling any hearing on the motion. The court may in its discretion decide a motion without requiring a written response or scheduling a hearing.

LCR/SC-Contempt:

9

Post-judgment contempt actions alleging failure to complete a financial disclosure statement must be supported by affidavit and must be personally served.

LCR/SC-Failure to appear:

10

Tardiness (failure to be present in the courtroom set forth in the notice when the case is called) or failure to have all necessary parties present on the return date are considered failures to appear and will result in a default judgment or a dismissal.

Small Claims Service

Mail service of small claims pleadings, except eviction and replevin actions, has long been an accepted and approved procedure in Vernon County, in lieu of personal or substituted service. This will affirm the procedures as provided by small claims statutory authority and specifically allow service by mail, except for eviction and replevin actions, pursuant to Section 799.12 (2) and (3) of the Wisconsin Statutes.

Dated: March 2015