

THE SEMINAR FOR FAMILIES IN CHANGE & CONFLICT

You must attend this Seminar. All parties to a custody action, a divorce case where there are children under the age of 18, a child support appeal and other family law matters are required to attend the Seminar for Families in Change and Conflict, a four hour class developed by PACER and Interworks. The Seminar is also open to any adults who wish to voluntarily attend in addition to those parties ordered by the Court. **Litigation concerning custody, child support and/or divorce is painful for adults and far worse for the children. If steps are not taken, the stress and conflict can scar your children for life.**

This seminar will help you create and provide a healthy and positive environment in which your children can grow without being too negatively affected by the conflict and litigation.

PLEASE READ ANSWERS BELOW TO QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE REGARDING THE SEMINAR:

What will I learn at the Seminar?

This is **not a parenting class**. The Seminar provides educational information in a group format through presentations and acted-out scenarios to highlight the impact of change and conflict on all family members. The goal is to enhance your ability and inspire you to remain a stable and supporting force in your children's lives. Topics focus on the changing needs of children at different ages and the strain on children of families involved in contested legal proceedings. In addition, the Seminar provides information and tools for parents and caregivers on co-operative problem solving with the focus on the children's **best interests** instead of the conflict and changing their atmosphere of fear, hurt, anger, and distress to a more healthy child-centered home.

How will I be scheduled for the Seminar?

The Orders to attend the Seminar for Families in Change and Conflict are either mailed to all parties or handed to you in Court. The Order includes the date and time you are scheduled to attend the Seminar.

What are the procedures to attend the Seminar?

Registration is done at the Dauphin County Courthouse before each seminar for all parties attending that date. Parties who attend the Seminar on the court assigned date are **guaranteed registration** at the door. To hear an audio recording of information regarding seminar policies, call PACER at (717) 236-1912 or email PACER at pacer@interworksonline.com.

What should I do if I cannot attend the Seminar session ordered?

You may be held in contempt of court and fined for not attending the Seminar. Parties are expected to attend prior to their Custody Conference, Support Appeal, or Divorce Conference. Parties who do not attend the Seminar on the original court assigned date, are **NOT** guaranteed registration at the door for other dates. Parties may be turned away depending on space availability or the presence of the opposing parties who were scheduled to that date and are in attendance. Additionally, parties will be charged a rescheduling fee.

Parties may reschedule themselves by contacting PACER at pacer@interworksonline.com or by calling PACER at 717-236-1912 to hear upcoming Seminar dates. When leaving a message, please provide your name, case docket number, your email address, telephone number and when you want to attend.

Will the other parent/party be attending the same session of the Seminar?

No. Opposing parties are assigned to separate dates to allow the free flow of information so that each party feels safe to respond. This is especially necessary when there is high conflict between opposing parties.

Where is the Seminar held?

The Seminar is presented in the Jury Assembly Room of the Dauphin County Courthouse, 101 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA. Enter through the Market Street entrance. You will have to go through security (do not bring knives, mace or other similar prohibited items).

Must I attend the Seminar if I previously attended?

You must attend the Seminar again if you have not attended within the previous 12 months or were ordered to attend by the Custody Conference Officer or Judge if they believe you would benefit from attending again.

Is there a fee for the Seminar?

The \$50 fee (cash, credit card, check or money order) must be paid at the door. Please arrive at the Courthouse at least 15 minutes early to complete the registration process. If you have been granted In Forma Pauperis (IFP) status, you are required to bring a copy of your IFP order to receive the discount.

Should I bring my children or others to the Seminar?

No. Children cannot attend and there is no childcare available. Persons not attending the Seminar are not permitted in the Courthouse.

Will security be present at all times? Yes.

Is the Courthouse wheelchair accessible?

The Courthouse is wheelchair accessible through the employee entrance at the back of the Courthouse (ramp parallel to Blackberry Alley). If you need to use this entrance, please contact the Court Administrator's Office at (717-780-6624) Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. at least two days before your Seminar date.

What should I do if I am unable to attend because of a disability?

You must provide your doctor's statement on his/her stationery verifying that you are physically or mentally unable to attend. The MD statement is to be sent to the Court Administrator's Office by email at dsmyre2@dauphinc.org, by fax at (717) 780-6463, or mail to Ms. D. Smyre, 3rd Floor, Dauphin County Courthouse, 101 Market Street, Harrisburg PA 17101. If approved, you may complete a home study course.

What should I do if I cannot speak or understand English? / ¿Adonde puedo recurrir si no hablo o entiendo inglés? Comuníquese con: pacer@interworksonline.com or (717) 236-1912.

What should I do if I do not live near the Dauphin County Courthouse?

If you live within 50 miles of Harrisburg, you will be expected to attend this Seminar. If you live beyond the 50 miles, contact PACER or attend a similar Seminar closer to your residence. Similar seminars are available in most other counties and states. If you choose to attend another seminar, you must provide the Court with a copy of your Certificate of Completion. You should mail the Certificate of Completion to Ms. D. Smyre, 3rd Floor, Dauphin County Courthouse, 101 Market Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101.

What is the format of the Seminar? Will I be permitted to ask questions?

The presenters will explain the numerous emotional issues your children may be experiencing. If your children have not directly told you they are struggling, presenters will point out behaviors to look for. They will explain the importance of redirecting your primary focus to your children's best interests, as opposed to your personal feelings. You will receive a study guide and useful handouts to be used as an on-going resource and to further explain concepts important during this time of litigation and conflict. The presenters will act out scenarios to highlight the tools they are trying to emphasize to help you and your children get through this conflict in the healthiest and most positive way. You will be permitted to ask questions at certain points during the presentations and you will be permitted to stay after the Seminar to ask specific questions.