

**TO: PARENTS WITH AN APPLICATION TO MODIFY DECREE OF DISSOLUTION, PATERNITY DECREE, AND MOTION TO COMPEL EXISTING ORDER.**

**DEAR PARENTS:**

**If you are a party to an Application to Modify a Dissolution of Marriage Decree, a Paternity Decree, or a Motion to Compel Existing Order involving custody, parenting time, visitation, or other access issues, the Douglas County District Court Rule 4.3D requires you to attend a parent education program, 'Reach Beyond Conflict,' within 10 days of filing or receipt of service unless all issues are resolved by agreement and entry of a stipulated order.**

The seminar is offered by Douglas County Conciliation & Mediation Services and reservations must be made for the session you plan to attend. Please call **402-444-7168** to obtain the schedule of dates and to reserve space. **Each party needs to call for their own reservation and leave docket/page number and current address and phone number information.** PRIOR TO ATTENDING THE SCHEDULED SESSION, A \$50 FEE MUST BE PAID TO THE CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT. IF YOU DO NOT ATTEND ON YOUR SCHEDULED DATE, AN ADDITIONAL \$25 CANCELLATION FEE WILL BE CHARGED. The clerk's office is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Hall of Justice.

The class will provide information to help parents recognize the harm that can be done to children through inappropriate communications and behaviors by parents. The class will also provide information to help parents in separate homes understand their responsibility for parenting functions and the impact of conflict on children, discuss ways to minimize conflict between parents, keep a focus on safety for children, and help parents evaluate their situation by looking at different parenting styles. Parents will be provided contact information about local resources available to separated parents on parenting from separate homes and responding appropriately to child development at different ages.

Before your case can be concluded, court rule 4.3 requires the parents to **attempt to mediate** an agreement of the disputed issues or a modification of their parenting plan to address the unresolved parenting issues. The parenting seminar will provide an overview of what to expect in this mediation process. After your attendance at the seminar, you should determine as soon as possible if a resolution of the disputed issues can be accomplished through successful negotiation with the other parent. ***Please advise your attorney of the date you attend the seminar.*** If you are mediating, please prepare for this process by discussing with your attorney the statutory requirements for modification of an existing order and the statutory definitions and requirements of legal custody, physical custody, parenting functions, parenting time, and the financial obligations required of each parent. It is helpful in this type of mediation to be realistic about your expectations and opportunity to change your current order and parenting plan, or to comply with the current court order. There will be a fee charged for this process however it may be reduced if you are low income, meet income guidelines, and request a reduced fee. If you or your attorney do not advise us that you are negotiating a settlement or modification to your existing parenting plan, then the Conciliation Court will assign a mediator to your case shortly after your attendance at the seminar.

A trial or date for a final hearing will not be set until the parties have attended the seminar, a full resolution of the issues has been reached and a stipulation has been submitted by attorneys, or you have participated in an effort to mediate the unresolved parenting issues.

These procedures are intended to provide information to help you ease this painful process for your children, minimize the hostility between parents, and provide effective tools for determining how your parenting issues can be effectively resolved.