
PARENT EDUCATION AND CO-PARENTING EFFECTIVELY

The Santa Barbara County Superior Court requires all parents going through legal proceedings involving minor children to attend and complete the mandatory **PARENT EDUCATION AND CO-PARENTING EFFECTIVELY (“PEACE”)** program. The legal proceedings may include, but are not limited to, actions for legal separation, marriage dissolution, complaints to establish parental relationship, or actions to establish or modify custody or visitation. PEACE is a program designed to help parents work together in a cooperative manner to resolve disputes which hamper their children’s best interests. The program is taught by the County’s Family Custody Services staff. The program is designed to help parents understand their emotions and help them develop ways to work together to provide emotional and physical stability for their children. The program can save both money and court time.



Here is how the program works:

What is PEACE’s purpose? PEACE is a free, one time orientation and educational program designed to help parents who are separating or divorcing understand how these changes affect them and their children, learn about potential problems which may cause conflict or be harmful to the children, and understand ways to reduce conflict. PEACE also introduces parents to the mediation process, provides information about parenting plans for children of different ages, and gives ideas on how parents can successfully co-parent.



Program instructors are prohibited by law from providing any legal advice to those attending the class. Because time is limited, personal questions or comments from parents or others attending the class are discouraged. Such questions will be restated into general ideas in order to benefit the entire class. Case specific questions must be addressed with the attorney or through mediation.

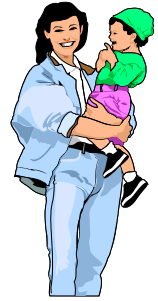
Where and when is the PEACE program held? The free PEACE classes are held every Thursday from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the Jury Assembly Room located in the back parking lot of the Superior Court Complex, Santa Maria Branch, 312 East Cook Street, Santa Maria, California. Preregistration is not required, however, participants must call 346-7493 for verification of the class the night before as it may be occasionally necessary to postpone a class.

Do not be late! Be sure to arrive with enough time to find the classroom. It is recommended that participants arrive by 1:45 p.m. To avoid disrupting the class, persons

arriving after 2:00 p.m. are not allowed to enter. Those arriving late will find the Jury Assembly Room locked, a sign posted on the door, and will be required to attend the program at a later date.

Parties may choose to attend the “*Children in the Middle*” program in Santa Barbara rather than the PEACE program. A \$50.00 fee is required for the “*Children in the Middle*” program. For more information concerning the “*Children in the Middle*” program call (805) 568-3133.

The court may accept written verification of attendance at an equivalent parent education program sponsored by another county or state if the attendance at our local program is found to be a hardship to a parent living outside of the local area. An order delaying or waiving the requirement to attend a parent education program may be obtained from the court upon showing of good cause.



What do I need to bring to the class? Participants MUST bring their case number(s)!!! Also bring a pen and paper.

Do not bring children to the program. The class content is for adults only.

Parents are not required to attend the program together, and in cases filed under the Domestic Violence Prevention Act, it is recommended that the parties not attend the same class.

How will the court know I attended the program? At the class’ conclusion, parents will be issued a Verification of Attendance which must be filed with the Superior Court Clerk’s Office at 312 East Cook Street, Santa Maria, or presented it to the attorney to file with the Court.

Do I need to attend PEACE before my mediation appointment? **Yes**. Parents who participate in custody mediation at Family Custody Services need to complete this program before mediation. Parents need only attend the program one time, so it is not required that they attend the class before every mediation. If either parent has not completed the required parent education program by the mediation date, then, if possible, the mediation date is

reset to a later time to permit the parent(s) to attend the program first. The mediator may, at his or her discretion, proceed with the mediation if it is in the children's best interest. In any case, the mediator will first require any parent who has not attended the program, and who has not obtained a waiver of the requirement, to sign a written stipulation, which will become a court order, requiring the parent to attend the program no later than a specified date. Parents attending mediation may not bring children who are under age five. Children between age five and twelve must have an adult supervisor in addition to the parents or the mediation will have to be rescheduled.

No confidentiality rights exist regarding the program, but parents and others attending are encouraged to respect each other's sense of privacy. The parent education class instructors have the right to ask any disruptive person to leave, and such persons will not receive a certificate of attendance for the program.