

NOTICE TO PARENTS

Parenting after Separation online course

1. **Prior to your court date, complete the Parenting after Separation online course**

The court expects all parents to complete the Parenting after Separation course prior to their court date if requesting custody and parenting orders.

The course is located at <http://www.familieschange.ca.gov/>

This online course helps parents make informed decisions about their separation, putting the children's needs first. The course takes approximately 2-4 hours to complete and is free.

This site is a wonderful resource for families and includes free guides and handbooks.

Note: Once you complete your course, please print your completion certificate and bring it to your court date.

2. **Go to your court date**

Your first court date will be scheduled at 8:00 a.m. Please be on time. You will watch a short orientation video which will prepare you for the mediation process.

When your case is called, the judge will ask you to meet with the mediator to see if an agreement can be reached.

If no agreement is reached, the court will schedule a full mediation appointment and you will have to return to court.

3. **If you reach an agreement prior to your court date**

In most cases, parents can make their own agreements for custody and parenting time, without a court order. If you make an agreement between the 2 of you, the agreement becomes binding and enforceable. But if 1 of you does not follow the agreement, a court cannot enforce it until it becomes a court order. So, if you and the other parent agree on a parenting plan and want a court order that either of you can enforce if 1 of you violates the agreement, you can turn in your agreement to the judge at your court date. The judge will probably approve the agreement, sign it, and it will become a court order.

There are many online resources to assist in writing up a parenting plan. If you need additional assistance with any forms, please contact the Family Law Facilitator at 209-257-2627.

 PLEASE NOTE 

A COPY OF THIS NOTICE MUST BE SERVED ON THE OTHER PARTY