

DIVORCE EDUCATION PROGRAM SUMMARY

CALENDAR YEAR 2015

The Divorce Education Program in Utah began as a pilot program on July 1, 1992 and expanded to a statewide mandatory program on July 1, 1994. The statute requires all divorcing couples with children under the age of eighteen to attend a one session, two hour class held in time frames to accommodate both working and non-working parents. State-wide class schedules are available at <https://www.utcourts.gov/specproj/dived/>. The goal of the class is to educate and sensitize divorcing parents to their children's needs both during and after the divorce process. The course covers the following:

- How parents can help their children through the divorce process.
- The correlation between parental conflict and a child's adjustment to divorce.
- The stages of growth and development of children.
- Children's normal reactions to their parent's divorce based on their ages.
- Helpful ways to communicate with children about the divorce.
- Grieving stages common to divorce.
- Helpful ways to share parenting responsibilities.
- Helpful ways to encourage cooperative behavior with an ex-spouse.
- Handouts to be used as a resource at home.

The Administrative Office of the Courts contracts with mental health professionals throughout the state to teach these classes. Following are the numbers statewide of parents who attended class January 1, 2015- December 31, 2015.

- Total parents attending Divorce Orientation in 2015: **9285**
- Monthly average of parents attending Divorce Orientation in 2015: **774**
- Total "live" providers across the state: **9**

Classes are evaluated by participants at the end of each session and the overwhelming majority of parents are positive about the class, even if they were not initially enthusiastic. The most useful information reported is learning how their children feel and how their children may react to divorce. Based on the evaluations, it appears that the Divorce Education Program for Parents continues to meet its intended goal.