

BrightStart
THE LOUISIANA EARLY CHILDHOOD
COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM INITIATIVE
Parenting Education and Family Support
Workgroup
July 31, 2006

Legally Mandated Parenting Education Programs in Louisiana

1) Department of Social Services:

- a) Parenting skills education program for public assistance recipients who are pregnant or have a child under age one, and require participation. La. R.S. 46:231.5.

- b) STEP (an employment program for work-eligible recipients of cash assistance):
“Participants who are pregnant or who have a child under age one shall be assigned to specialized work activities that include parenting education and other training conducive to the unique needs of new parents.” La. R.S. 231.7(B)

- c) Foster parents shall receive training in obtaining needed services for foster children, discipline and foster children, legal aspects of foster care, working with parents and the agency. LA R.S. 46:283 (C).

- d) OFS--provides subsidies to certain family members who care for a minor child. La. R. S. 46:237. The regulations provide that: “As a condition of eligibility for KCSP benefits any child under age 19 who is pregnant or the parent of a child under the age of one must attend a parenting skills education program.” La. Admin. Code tit. 67, pt. III, sec. 5339.

- e) A number of TANF Initiatives provide for the creation of parenting programs or for parenting training. None specify what these programs will include or qualifications for the instructors: Parenting/Fatherhood Services Program, Community Supervision Program, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program. La. Admin. Code tit. 67, pt.III, secs. 5561, 5571, 5573, 5575.

2) Department of Education:

- a) Under La. R.S. 17:14.1 the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education shall formulate a family literacy demonstration program to identify effective models of community-based family literacy efforts. For preschool children and their parents.
One component shall be “parents or other persons responsible for a child’s school attendance that are participating in the program shall be instructed, as needed, in parenting skills....” To be implemented to the extent funded.

b) Parents As Teachers Program: A program established in the Dept. of Education to address the educational needs of targeted parents of children three years of age or less and shall use “qualified educators who are professionally trained in child development and parenting.” La. R.S. 17:256 The statute specifies that the course of instruction shall include the following: Timely and practical information and guidance on development in language, cognitive, and social skills, instruction in the effective use of community parenting resources, including developmental and medical screening and, as needed, early intervention for children through the first three years of life, contingent on the availability of resources and the level of voluntary parental participation, monthly visits to the home of each participating parent by one or more of the qualified educators administering the course. But--to be implemented to the extent funded. La. R.S. 17:256, 260.

3) Department of Health and Hospitals:

a) La. R.S. 28:824 concerns the creation of a plan for a system of community and family supports for children with developmental disabilities and their families by the LA State Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. The statute provides that such a system will include family support services and that these services shall include “parent education and training” which is defined as “services which provide guidance to community parenting groups to assist families of children with special needs.” La. R.S. 28: 822, 824.

4) Department of Safety and Corrections:

a) La. R.S. 15:827.1(C) provides that not more than six months prior to an offender’s anticipated date of release, he shall begin a 100 hour pre-release orientation program. The program shall include “parenting skills,” and volunteers can be used for the provision of any or all of the program.

5) The Judiciary:

a) A court exercising jurisdiction over family matters may require the parties in a custody or visitation proceeding to attend a court-approved seminar on the needs of children. If a court does require this, it must adopt rules including: criteria for evaluating a seminar and its instructors, the amount of time of the program—minimum of three hours, a maximum of four hours. La. R.S. 9:306. The seminar shall contain, but not be limited to: Developmental stages of childhood, the needs of children at different ages, and age appropriate expectations of children, Stress indicators in children adjusting to divorce, the grief process, and avoiding delinquency, The possible enduring emotional effects of divorce, Changing parental and marital roles, Recommendations with respect to visitation, Financial obligations of child rearing, Conflict management and dispute resolution. La. R.S. 9:306.

b) 2nd Judicial District Court - parents who are involved in a contested custody matter **must** participate in: “an educational program that is designed to make the

parties more aware of the effects of separation and divorce upon their children and to acquaint them with methods of assisting minor children to cope with the stress of divorce and custody proceedings.”

c) 4th and 8th JDC's - similar but makes it optional

d) 14th JDC - in all cases involving the custody of minor children the parties must “attend the Successful Partners in Parenting course prior to the granting of the judgment of divorce.”

e) 24th JDC –in all divorce cases involving minor children, the parties **must** attend parenting classes through Voices for Children.

f) The Revised Statutes provide that the supreme court, the courts of appeals, the district courts, family courts, juvenile courts and the city courts may punish a person guilty of contempt of court:

- When a parent has violated a visitation order - may require one or both parents to attend a parent education course. La. R.S. 13:4611