

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS**

Misc. Docket No. 96- 9008

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**APPROVAL OF LOCAL RULE REGARDING CHILDREN'S INTEREST SEMINAR  
IN FAMILY LAW CASES FOR THE 306TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
OF GALVESTON COUNTY, TEXAS**

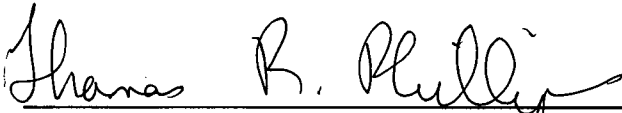
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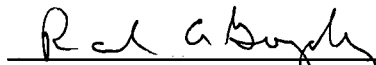
**ORDERED:**


Pursuant to Rule 3a of the Texas Rules of Civil Procedure, the Supreme Court approves the adoption of the Local Rule regarding children's interest seminar in family law cases for the 306th Judicial District Court of Galveston County, Texas which is dated December 11, 1995 and is attached hereto.

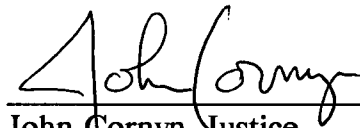
The approval of these rules is temporary, pending further orders of the Court.

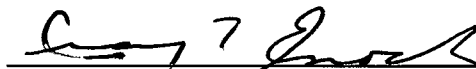
SIGNED AND ENTERED this 3rd day of January, 1996


  
Thomas R. Phillips, Chief Justice

  
Raul A. Gonzalez, Justice

  
Nathan L. Hecht, Justice


  
John Cornyn, Justice

  
Craig Enoch, Justice

  
Rose Spector, Justice

  
Priscilla R. Owen, Justice

  
James A. Baker, Justice

  
Greg Abbott, Justice

**IN THE 306TH JUDICIAL DISTRICT COURT  
GALVESTON COUNTY, STATE OF TEXAS**

This local rule is promulgated, subject to the approval of the Supreme Court of Texas.

**Section 1.** This rule applies to all parties in all suits affecting the parent-child relationship filed in the 306th Judicial District court on or after the 45th day after this rule is approved by the Supreme Court of Texas.

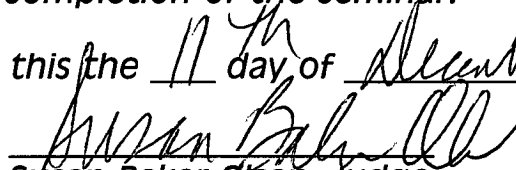
**Section 2.** The 306th Judicial District Court requires such parties to successfully complete a seminar that addresses the issues confronting children that are the subject of divorce, custody, and child support litigation. Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein for all purposes describes the seminar. Each party is responsible for payment of the appropriate fee.

**Section 3.** The seminar shall be successfully completed within 60 days of the service of the original petition upon the respondent, or if service is waived, then within 60 days of the waiver of citation.

**Section 4.** Upon a party's failure to successfully complete the seminar pursuant to this rule, the Court may take appropriate action.

**Section 5.** For good cause shown, the Court may waive the requirement of completion of the seminar.

Signed on this the 11<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1995.

  
Susan Baker Oisen, Judge  
306th Judicial District Court

Approved by the Administrative Judge.

  
I. Allan Lerner, Administrative Judge

Approved by the Presiding Judge of the Second Administrative Judicial Region on the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Judge Thomas J. Stovall, Jr.  
Presiding Judge, 2nd Administrative Judicial Region

Approved by the Supreme Court of Texas, on the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk, Supreme Court of Texas

## **EXHIBIT "A"**

### **FOR KID'S SAKE (CHILDREN'S INTEREST SEMINAR)**

*The seminar shall focus fostering emotional health for children during periods of stress brought about by divorce and conflict between divorced parents.*

*The seminar administrator shall be designated by the Court. The Court has currently designated OKLA ANDERSON to be the seminar administrator.*

*The course content shall generally consist of the following:*

- (1) the developmental stages of childhood;*
- (2) the needs of children at different ages;*
- (3) stress indicators in children;*
- (4) age appropriate expectations of children;*
- (5) divorce as a growth stage;*
- (6) the grief process;*
- (7) reducing stress for children going through a divorce;*
- (8) in changing parental and marital roles;*
- (9) visitation recommendation to enhance the child's relationship with both parents;*
- (10) financial obligation's of child rearing;*
- (11) conflict management and dispute resolution.*

*Each seminar shall be a minimum of two hours and a maximum of four hours. The seminar may include the showing of videos, such as "**Don't Forget the Children**" and "**Children in the Middle**".*

*The seminar shall be presented at such times and places as scheduled and announced by the seminar administrator.*

*A fee of no more than \$20.00, unless waived by the Court, may be charged by the seminar administrator to be used to cover costs.*

*Each person completing the seminar and paying the appropriate fee shall receive a certificate to file with the Court.*

*The Court may require a certified peace officer to be in attendance at each seminar to provide security.*



to CP  
prepa. order

**SECOND ADMINISTRATIVE JUDICIAL REGION  
OF TEXAS**

**THOMAS J. STOVALL, JR.  
PRESIDING JUDGE**

**JUDY MAPLES GEIGER  
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

**VIKKI NELSON  
REGIONAL DOCKET MANAGER**

P.O. BOX 40, SEABROOK, TEX. 77586  
PHONE (713) 471-3911

OFFICE LOCATED: HARRIS COUNTY  
COURTHOUSE, LA PORTE ANNEX  
117 E. AVE. A, LA PORTE, TEXAS

**December 13, 1995**

**Hon. Nathan L. Hecht, Justice  
Supreme Court of Texas  
P. O. Box 12248  
Austin, TX., 78711**

**Re: Local Rules, Galveston County**

**Dear Justice:**

**Enclosed is a corrected amendment to the Local Rules of Galveston County. These are approved by the Local Administrative Judge and seem to be an amendment to the Rules approved October 7, 1992.**

**There is an open letter to Judges presiding over family law cases in the Fall Issue of In Chambers, Vol. 22, No.4, a copy of which I enclose, in case you didn't see it. This may be the same video ("Children in the Middle") mentioned.**

**I have no objection to this amendment, as long as it is carefully used.**

**Sincerely,**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Stovall, Jr.", written over a faint, illegible typed name.

*From the executive director*

The Texas Center for the Judiciary has been a part of a changing scene in judicial education. As I am sure you noticed if you attended the 1995 Judicial Section Annual Conference or the Criminal Justice Conference or any other program sponsored by the Texas Center in 1995, the number of judges coming to our programs has greatly increased. However, this is one of those good news, bad news scenarios.

We are pleased to know the programs offered by the Texas Center are bringing out record numbers of judges. However, the number of judges we serve has increased almost 12% in just this past year. For example, the number of judges who attended the College for New Judges in 1993 was 14; for 1994 that number increased to 117! The bad news is that the grant funds the Texas Center applies for and subsequently receives each year has stayed the same, or in some years actually decreased. This inevitably results in a shortfall no matter what we do to increase our efficiency and decrease our expenses.

Many, many judges in the state have shown their support of the Texas Center through their generous contributions. The Board of Directors of the Texas Center has authorized the use of part of these contributions to supplement our grant funds so we can continue to provide quality judicial programs. In the future, you will have the opportunity to support the Texas Center at all of our programs.

You can do that by choosing to donate to the Texas Center for the Judiciary all or a portion of the reimbursable expenses you receive from our judicial education programs. There will be a space on the reimbursement form for you to indicate your contribution should you choose to do so. The Board unanimously and enthusiastically supported this fundraising effort and most of them donated all or a portion of their reimbursable expenses from their last meeting to the Texas Center.

The Texas Center staff looks forward to another successful and innovative year in judicial education. Thank you for all the support you have given us and continue to provide.

— M.K.B.

**An open letter to Texas judges presiding over family law cases**

RE: Center for Divorce Education & Family Partners, Inc. ("Children in the Middle")

The Center for Divorce Education of Athens, Ohio and what appears to be a Houston area franchise or spin-off called Family Partners, Inc. (no address provided; only a "713" area code phone number) are rather aggressively marketing a program entitled "Children in the Middle."

Promotional material indicates that the program would seem to meet the criteria of Rule 11 of the Rules of the Judicial District Courts of Harris County, Texas, Family Trial Division. Rule 11 states "Referral shall be made in divorces with suits affecting the parent-child relationship requiring the parents' attendance at an educational program for divorcing parents, except for good cause shown..." While I long have supported and continue to support any and all reasonable efforts to make the divorce process less painful, especially for children, I am troubled by the following statements in Family Partners' promotional materials.

"Recently Texas passed a law, H.B. 48, section 153.0025, which allows judges to mandate divorce education in any suit affecting the parent-child relationship. This act names a four-hour course which covers eight topics including conflict management, indicators of stress in children, reduction of children's stress, children's developmental stages, etc. We have developed a video-based parent education program which covers these topics." (Quoted from promotional letter dated 8/4/95 from Don Gordon, co-director of the Center for Divorce Education, Athens, Ohio.)

"This program is presently being used very successfully throughout the nation and meets the requirements as mandated by Texas State Law." (Quoted from promotional letter dated 9/10/95 from Mimi Lupin, director of Family Partners, Inc., no address provided.)

The Texas Legislature did not pass H.B. 48 (It didn't even get out of committee); there is no section 153.0025 in the Texas Family Code; and I am aware of no such "requirements as mandated by Texas State Law (sic)."

Maybe there should be such a law. But there is not. Maybe the "Children in the Middle" program is marvelous. I don't know, but judges who pay \$20 can preview the program. And maybe those who attend this program receive other incorrect information. I hope not.

I just thought you should be aware.

Very truly yours,

John D. Montgomery  
Judge, 309th District Court  
Harris County, Texas



**Family District Court  
306th Judicial District**

**Susan Baker Olsen, Judge**

BOARD CERTIFIED - FAMILY LAW  
TEXAS BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

**Gloria Robledo**  
Court Coordinator  
Fax (409) 766-9754

**Jan Boening**  
Court Reporter  
(409) 766-2254

*December 11, 1995*

*Honorable Thomas J. Stovall, Jr.  
Presiding Judge, 2nd Administrative Judicial District  
P.O. Box 40  
Seabrook, Texas 77586*

*Dear Judge Stovall:*

*Enclosed please find corrected local rule for your consideration.*

*Thank you for your cooperation.*

*Sincerely,*

*Susan Baker Olsen*  
Susan Baker Olsen, Judge  
Family District Court  
306th Judicial District

*cc: enclosure*



THE SUPREME COURT OF TEXAS

CHIEF JUSTICE  
THOMAS R. PHILLIPS

POST OFFICE BOX 12248      AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

TEL: (512) 463-1312

FAX: (512) 463-1365

CLERK  
JOHN T. ADAMS

JUSTICES  
RAUL A. GONZALEZ  
NATHAN L. HECHT  
JOHN CORNYN  
CRAIG ENOCH  
ROSE SPECTOR  
PRISCILLA R. OWEN  
JAMES A. BAKER  
GREG ABBOTT

EXECUTIVE ASS'T  
WILLIAM L. WILLIS

ADMINISTRATIVE ASS'T  
NADINE SCHNEIDER

January 8, 1996

Hon. Susan Baker Olsen  
306th District Court  
722 Moody, 5th Floor  
Galveston, Texas 77550

Dear Judge Olsen,

Please find enclosed, a copy of the order of the Supreme Court that approved local rules for the 306th District Court.

Sincerely,

**SIGNED**

John T. Adams  
Clerk

Encl.

cc: Hon. Thomas J. Stovall, Jr.  
2nd Admin. Judicial Rgn

Hon. David E. Garner  
10th District Court

District Clerk

County Clerk

Supreme Court Adv Committee

Mr. Jerry Benedict  
Office of Court Admin

State Law Library