

SMILE PROGRAM

The judges of the Fourth & Seventh Judicial Circuits have adopted a general requirement that parents in divorce, custody, and visitation (parenting time) cases attend a short class on the effects of divorce or parental conflict on children. In these Circuits, the judges have chosen to use the SMILE Program, which stands for "Start Making It Livable for Everyone." SMILE was originally developed by a group of Michigan courts and "Friend of the Court" programs (called Court Appointed Special Advocates, or CASA, here in South Dakota). SMILE is now used by many states and jurisdictions across the United States.

The SMILE program is offered through Catholic Social Services in Spearfish and Rapid City. Please see the schedule for dates and times of classes. The program usually takes less than two hours and involves a video, an information booklet, and a short group discussion. A fee is charged at the door to cover the expense of the video, the booklet, and the facilitator's time.

Parents are strongly encouraged to complete the program in person at one of the offered evening sessions. If you cannot attend the sessions in either Spearfish or Rapid City because of work reasons or you live far away, you may ask your judge to allow you to attend a SMILE program at one of the many other courts using the program around the United States. An internet search on the phrase "SMILE divorce" will list many other locations. Here is the link for information about the local program:

<https://catholicsocialservicesrapidcity.com/services/smile/> (S.M.I.L.E.)

The program is certainly most effective in person, but if you absolutely cannot complete the SMILE program in person for some exceptional reason, you can ask a judge to allow you to complete the program online, here. At the links below you will find (1) the video, (2) the booklet, and a verification form that must be signed by you and one other person to verify that you watched the entire video and reviewed all the pages of the booklet.

- [SMILE Video](#)
- [SMILE Brochure](#)
- [Online Verification Form](#)

Our special thanks to the Friend of the Court Program in Oakland County, Michigan, for allowing us to use this program and to post the video and booklet on the web.