

**RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN FAMILY COURT**

**Dress:** Shorts, tank or halter tops, undershirts, sunglasses and hats are forbidden .

**Cell phones/pagers:** Cell phone and pager use is strictly prohibited in the courtroom.

**Speaking:** A court proceeding is not a free-for-all where people say whatever they want. Parties should not speak unless directed by the judge or lawyer to speak, **then speak only to the judge or lawyer. A party should never speak directly to the other spouse in court.** Interruptions, sarcasm, insults and unresponsive answers will not be tolerated. **Do not start arguments or threaten anyone.**

**Appearing without an attorney:** The Court must treat an unrepresented party the same way it treats a lawyer.

**What Judges cannot do:** Neither Judge nor Judicial Assistant can give an unrepresented litigant legal advice, practice tips or help in writing court papers.

**Contact with Judge's Office:** Neither the Judge nor Judicial Assistant can discuss your case with you or have a private conference. If you wish to schedule a hearing, please call the Family Court Self Help Specialist or your Case Manager.

**There are additional rules and regulations regarding minor children. Please review all rules provided and follow them strictly.**

**ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

**(Also referred to as Mediation)**

**Monroe County provides Alternative Dispute Resolution in all cases. This process is encouraged early in all proceedings. This service allows the parties to resolve and settle their disputes with the help of an independent third party. The cost of mediation is also considerably less than lengthy litigation. Fees are based on the combined yearly income of the parties and can be as little as \$40.00 per person. If you would like to schedule a mediation of your case please contact Lourdes Leal for scheduling in the upper keys (Marathon & Plantation Key) at (305) 853-7386 or for lower keys and Key West locations (305) 292-3489.**

**OUR FAMILY COURT STAFF:**

**KEY WEST**

ARLENE MARTINEZ, SELF HELP  
(305) 295-3643

ALLISON KATZ, CASE MANAGER  
(305) 292-3429

BRANDI GREEN, CASE MANAGER  
(305) 295-3620

MARISA PARRA, DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE CASE COORDINATOR  
(305) 295-3647

**UPPER KEYS**

**(MARATHON & PLANTATION KEY)**

WENDY DUBE, SELF HELP & CASE  
MANAGER FOR THE UPPER KEYS  
(305) 853-7387

ELIZABETH LOGAN, DOMESTIC  
VIOLENCE CASE COORDINATOR  
(305) 853-7344

**FAMILY COURT MANAGER**

SHARON I. HAMILTON  
(305) 853-7365

THE FAMILY COURT STAFF FOR  
MONROE COUNTY LOOKS FORWARD  
TO PROVIDING YOU WITH PROFES-  
SIONAL SERVICES AND TIMELY  
PROCESSING OF YOUR FAMILY LAW  
CASE.

**FAMILY COURT FOR THE  
SIXTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT**

**PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AND CASE  
MANAGEMENT FOR THE PEOPLE OF  
MONROE COUNTY, FLORIDA**



**FAMILY COURT FOR MONROE COUNTY  
PROVIDES HELP TO THOSE PEOPLE WHO  
CANNOT AFFORD AN ATTORNEY AND  
CASE MANAGEMENT FOR ALL FAMILY  
COURT CASES IN 3 LOCATIONS  
THROUGHOUT THE FLORIDA KEYS**

**KEY WEST COURTHOUSE**

**302 Fleming Street  
Key West, FL 33040**

**MARATHON COURTHOUSE**

**3117 Overseas Highway  
Marathon, FL 33050**

**PLANTATION KEY COURTHOUSE**

**88820 Overseas Highway  
Plantation Key, FL 33070**

## SELF HELP (ALSO REFERRED TO AS PRO SE) PROGRAM

Court proceedings involving family law are often emotional and difficult. It is highly recommended that you seek the advice of an attorney who will represent your interests. If, however you choose to represent yourself, Family Court Staff can provide you with the forms for many court proceedings. Below are a few examples:

- DIVORCE
- CHILD CUSTODY
- CHILD SUPPORT
- VISITATION
- NAME CHANGES
- PATERNITY
- ENFORCEMENT OF FAMILY COURT ORDERS
- OTHER MATTERS WITHIN THE FAMILY

## THESE FORMS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON THE

INTERNET AT: [www.flcourts.org](http://www.flcourts.org) or [Keyscourts.net](mailto:Keyscourts.net)

Once you complete the forms our Self Help Specialist will review them for filing requirements only. Our staff will not fill out the forms for you. Each form comes with a set of instructions. Our Self Help Specialists **are not attorneys and cannot provide you with legal advice, explain your rights or represent you in court.**

Family Court staff can notarize your documents and explain how your case will move through the court system.

FAMILY COURT STAFF PROVIDES THIS SERVICE TO ANY PARTY. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO BOTH SIDES OF A CASE.  
PLEASE REMEMBER THE INFORMATION YOU GIVE TO FAMILY COURT STAFF IS NOT CONFIDENTIAL AND MAY BE SUBJECT TO DISCLOSURE

**IF YOU CHOOSE TO REPRESENT YOURSELF IT IS SUGGESTED THAT YOU MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE SELF HELP SPECIALIST NEAREST YOU**

## IF YOU HAVE FILED AN ACTION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE (DIVORCE) AND YOU HAVE A MINOR CHILD OR CHILDREN, FLORIDA STATUTE 61.21 REQUIRES BOTH PARENTS TO COMPLETE AN APPROVED PARENTING COURSE

### BELOW ARE CURRENT PROVIDERS OF THIS REQUIRED PARENTING CLASS

• WESTLEY HOUSE FAMILY SERVICES (KEY WEST CLASSES) (305) 292-7150  
• MICHAEL HOLLER, M.A. L.M.H.C. (12 HOUR HIGH CONFLICT COURSE) (305) 393-1230  
HERE IS THE LINK FOR ALL DCF APPROVED PARENTING CLASSES  
<http://www.myfloridafamilies.com/docs/parent>

## STANDARD CASE PROCEDURE

Once a Family Court case is filed it will automatically be scheduled for a CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE and all parties will receive a STANDING TEMPORARY DOMESTIC RELATIONS ORDER.

Your Case Management Conference will be heard at one of the 3 courthouse locations. Please make sure to review the rules and regulations you received from Family Court and show up properly dressed for Court.

AT THE CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE THE JUDGE OR MAGISTRATE WILL IDENTIFY THE ISSUES IN YOUR CASE, WHICH MAY INCLUDE:

- CHILD CUSTODY, VISITATION
- CHILD SUPPORT
- DISTRIBUTION OF ASSETS & DEBTS
- ALIMONY, TEMPORARY/PERMANENT STATUS OF MANDATORY DISCLOSURE
- STATUS OF ANY DISCOVERY ISSUES
- USE OF EXPERTS
- MEDIATION REFERRAL
- COMPLETION OF PARENTING CLASS
- FILING OF FINANCIAL AFFIDAVITS

The Judge or Magistrate may order certain tasks at the Case Management Conference. These tasks may include but are not limited to, filing proof of completion of the required parenting class and the exchange of Mandatory Disclosure items.

Florida Family Law Rule of Procedure 12.285 requires each party in a dissolution of marriage action to exchange certain information and documents, and file a Family Law Financial Affidavit. The financial affidavit may be obtained by contacting the Self Help Specialist nearest you. Some of the documents you must exchange are as follows:

- Financial Affidavit
  - Income tax returns for the past year
  - IRS forms W-2, 1099 and K-1 for the past year
  - Pay stubs or other evidence of income for the last 3 months
- The above is not a complete list of the mandatory disclosure. Please see Form 12.932 for a complete list.

## UNIFIED FAMILY COURT

Unified Family Court is the handling of all family cases involving the same children and families, while at the same time resolving family disputes in a fair, timely efficient, and cost effective manner.

Unified Family Court increases efficiency and is better for families by eliminating duplicate hearings, decreasing the potential for conflicting orders, creating opportunity for alternative dispute resolution and promoting more informed judicial decision making.

When you file a Family law case you are required to also file a **Notice of Related Cases**. This form provides for you to notify the court of all related cases involving your family. For instance if you have a Domestic Violence case and a divorce case you should provide that information on this form and both of your cases will be heard at the same time avoiding the necessity of multiple hearings on the same issues. If you become aware of multiple cases involving your family after the filing of your Family Court case please notify the Case Manager in your location so that we may bring all the cases together and provide you with time savings and efficiency of process. Our goal is to provide one judge for one family.