Where Do I Start??

1. Find out if anyone else in your county already offers co-parenting education. Your County Court Commissioner’s Office should know, so give them a call. While you are at it, ask them if your court *mandates* co-parenting classes for divorcing and/or never married couples.

2. How many divorces involving minor children occur in your county each year? Go here to find out: <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/stats/marriages.htm>. From this you can get a sense of how frequently you might wish to offer co-parenting classes. Remember that this is a starting point and doesn’t account for never-married couples who are separating.

3. Do your Extension colleagues in neighboring counties offer co-parenting classes? There is no substitute for the expertise of someone who is already teaching one of these classes. You can phone around and ask, or you can find a colleague with experience by seeing which counties are highlighted on the map of Wisconsin on the cover of our Comprehensive Statewide Report the Or you can contact one of the statewide team leaders (Jane Schaaf or Teri Zuege-Halvorsen) to ask who the peer-experts in your part of the state are When you give another Family Living Educator a call, ask them what co-parenting classes look like in their county (number of hours, fees, frequency offered, etc.). Who is the target audience (all divorces or only high conflict, contested divorces? Does it include the never-married, paternity cases)? Do they have any advice for you? You might even be able to sit in on one of their classes.

4. Check out the resources on <http://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/co-parenting/> to see what is possible and what help and materials you have available. Explore, see what you can find!

5. Explore <http://www.extension.umn.edu/family/parents-forever/> to learn more about the program. Stay tuned for upcoming trainings in Wisconsin or Minnesota.

6. Set up a meeting or phone call with someone from the co-parenting work group. This person can share experiences and insights to help you think through things like how often you might offer the program, ways to organize the agenda, potential community partners, or what fee to charge. Ask if they have found any special challenges when working with this audience and topic.

7. When you are ready, make an appointment to talk with your County Court Commissioner (or possibly the family court judge, this differs from place to place). Give them your pitch on why they ought to recommend your class to every divorcing parent with minor children (at the least), or actually mandate your class, as is done in most other Wisconsin counties (the better option). Be sure to see our “Handout for judges and parents” and the info under “Supplemental Resources” on legal resources.

8. One last starting point to consider: There is an e-parenting/co-parenting two hour face-to-face workshop all set to go! It’s available at <http://blogs.ces.uwex.edu/eparenting/> This is a great one-shot workshop to offer and can fill a need while you get everything else put in place.