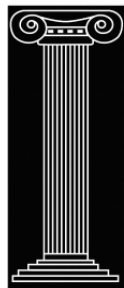


# **Holiday Tips for Divorced Parents**

**Presented by:**

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# Holiday Tips for Divorced Parents



The holiday season can be especially draining during a divorce. Generally, the first major holiday following the divorce is the most dramatic. Divorced parents must communicate with even more patience, understanding, respect and tolerance than married couples to plan holiday travel, family get-togethers and gift-giving. Juggling schedules during marriage is hard enough and is even harder during and after divorce. Here are some tips for making sure everyone enjoys the holidays:

**Plan Ahead:** If possible, develop a parenting schedule before the holidays. Avoid scheduling the children for activities with both parents on the same day. Instead, try to arrange for each parent to spend the entire day with the children on alternating years. For example, dad could have them for the day in all odd-numbered years and mom in all even-numbered years.

Also, remember that certain holidays have more or less importance in different families. It may be that Thanksgiving is the holiday where one side of the family gathers all together and Christmas is spent with the individual family members on their own. In those situations, recognize the significance of the holiday and offer that those particular holidays are spent with said parent. The other can then enjoy the Christmas holidays.

You could also consider spending a holiday a day after or before the holiday itself. Children generally do not mind extending holidays for the obvious reasons. Although Christmas Day is only December 25, many intact families spend the holiday on a day other than the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Keep Your Word:** Stick to the agreed schedule. Arrive on time to pick up the children or drop them off. You can be assured that the children will know what time they are supposed to be at the other parent's house for the holidays and running late for any reason will add additional stress to the children as well as to the parent sitting and waiting for his or her children.

**Keep in Touch:** If the children are not with you for the holidays, call them and be sure to send cards or e-mail. Also, remember their birthdays and significant holidays making sure that their gifts arrive on time for their birthday or the holiday. Remember that if the children are with the other parent during the holiday or event, call the children once, have an enjoyable discussion and then let it go. Remember when the children are with the other parent it is their time to be with their mother or father as well as that parent's extended family. Multiple phone calls only raises the stress level at both ends of the line.





**Let the Children Keep in Touch:** If the children spend the holiday with you, let them speak with the other parent. Give the children any cards or e-mails from the other parent and read the messages to young children who cannot read. If the children are too young to call, help them make or receive a call, and let them have a quiet moment to speak with the other parent. Make sure to avoid planning an exciting activity like gift-opening at the same time that the children are scheduled to speak with the other parent.

**The Art of Gift-Giving:** Coordinate gift-giving of the children with the other parent. Do not give your child a cell phone if you know the other parent is also giving your child a phone. Also, do not give a child a gift that you know in advance will not be tolerated by the other parent. A hunting rifle for a 12 year old may be a great gift between a father and a son but may not be acceptable for the mother. Discuss what each of you are planning to get for your child well in advance of the holiday. Also remember that simply because you give a gift to the child does not mean that gift must remain in your house.

**Give Your Child Permission to Love Both Parents:** If the child is too young to handle the task, help them buy or make a gift and card for the other parent. You are doing your child a favor, not your ex-spouse, because you are giving your child permission to love the other parent – the best gift you can give.

**For more information and helpful tips, please call us today at (866) 455-2993.**



## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

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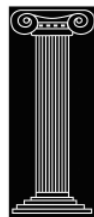
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