

5 Ways You and the Kids Can Experience Happy Holidays During Divorce

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With the holiday season just around the corner, parents going through a divorce have to figure out how to deal with each other. **Research shows that the way parents interact with each other during the initial separation sets the tone for future interactions.** Peacefully coordinating schedules during the first holiday season after your separation can be difficult, but keep in mind that you and your spouse are still connected through your kids and will be throughout the rest of your life.

While you no longer have an intimate relationship to resolve, you both still have to raise the children. Exchanging niceties will seem fake and unnatural at first but **being civil to each other in front of the kids will go a long way to help you settle into your new life** and create new holiday traditions after the divorce. Here are 5 ways to have a good holiday in the midst of divorce for the kids and for you:

1. Coordinate Your Holiday Schedule

Splitting time between two places for special days like Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas can be difficult for you and the kids. While you're working through the details, try to remember that **the holidays are about being together**. You don't have to have your Thanksgiving and Christmas celebrations on a specific date, you can **make the holiday special for your kids on any day you choose**.

If you can't agree on a schedule, or you both have events on the same day, you could apply the [Minimum schedule for parent-time in Utah](#) for children between the ages of 5 to 18 and [Parent-time for children under 5](#), even before the custody arrangements are established. But, do not leave it up to the kids – they love you both and asking them to choose who they'd rather be with is unfair.

2. Make Memories with New Traditions

The holiday traditions that you shared during your marriage can be painful for you and the kids to continue, so why not start creating new ones? ***If your kids are having a hard time, ask them for ideas for new traditions that they would enjoy.*** Kids need to know that they have a voice during this difficult time, make sure you let them know how thankful you are for them and listen to what they have to say.

If you have the means, a vacation to get away for a few days would be a great new tradition. But if you're financially strapped because of the separation, there are plenty of free and inexpensive things to do with your kids to make great memories. ***Your time and attention are the most valuable things you can give to them.*** Here are a few examples of holiday activities to build new traditions with your kids:

- **Watch a favorite movie or go to see a new release**
- **Volunteer together or donate old toys**
- **Make sugar cookies or build a gingerbread house**
- **Craft an annual ornament to hang on the tree**
- **See the holiday lights. Visit Temple Square or take a drive to see displays around town.**

3. Don't Stay Home Alone

When the kids are with the other parent, don't stay home alone. ***Now is the time to rely on family and friends for support.*** The fact that you realized you weren't happy with your ex is done, now you have the opportunity to reconnect with friends or spend extra time doing something that you love. Make plans to go out, invite guests over for dinner or spend some quality time with your best friend, siblings, parents, and grandparents.

While it can be easy to avoid other people when you're feeling sad, stressed or angry – it is important to ask for help from your support network of friends and family. If you find yourself unable to deal with the stress or feel depressed, talking to a licensed therapist will help you ***find ways to deal with emotional stress for your sake and for the sake of your kids.***

4. Make a New Year's Resolution

Going [through a divorce](#) can leave you feeling overwhelmed and anxious. ***Resolutions are new beginnings and now is the perfect time for you to gain confidence and clarity for your future.*** Your life is already changing, so why not focus on what you'd like to change in your life or

pursue new goals. Here is a list for the top new year's resolutions for separated or divorced parents:

- **Get Organized** – Now is a great time to clean out the closets and garage and declutter the house. **Set up a realistic cleaning schedule to help keep your house in order.** Include the kids, ask them to contribute by giving them chores that are appropriate for their age. Aside from organizing the house, it's also important to **organize your financial standing.** Gather financial documents like tax records, bank statements, credit card statements, and mortgage statements and store them in a safe place. This is also a great time to check your credit score to see if it needs to be tidied up as well.
- **Get in Shape** – Starting a regular exercise routine can banish depression and trigger endorphins and serotonin in your brain to make you feel happy. The emotional benefits of exercise, toning up and losing weight will **boost your energy level, help you sleep better and help build your self-confidence.** Spend some quality time with your kids outdoors with simple activities like going on a long walk or planning a hike or bike ride, the **exercise and fresh air will benefit everyone .**
- **Be a Cooperative Parent** – By encouraging your kids to love and spend time with their other parent, you are helping them to adjust to their new situation. **Kids with continuous, meaningful contact with both parents after a divorce or separation are happier.** Avoid doing things like bad mouthing your ex in front of the kids and withholding visitation. **Accept that your former spouse will also move on with his or her life .** Accommodate reasonable request for extended visitation and be understanding if something comes up and visitation needs to be postponed.

5. Find a Compassionate and Experienced Divorce and Child Custody Attorney in Utah to Relieve Stress

Going through divorce proceedings is emotional and scary for kids, but the conflict between parents afterward that can be the most detrimental. **With the help and guidance from an experienced, compassionate divorce and child custody attorney you can establish a fair and effective parenting plan, child support and alimony** to set the framework for expectations for you, your ex-spouse and the kids.

Contact Our Provo and Salt Lake City, Utah Attorney for a Free Case Evaluation

Eric M. Swinyard, attorney at law provides skillful legal advice in Salt Lake County and

Utah County for divorce and child custody in Utah. **Contact Eric** to schedule your **free**, confidential 30-minute consultation or call today at 801-833-0948 to learn about your **divorce options in Utah and legal options as a parent to ensure your child custody agreement is in your child's best interests.**

Practice Areas

Eric M. Swinyard is a family law and divorce attorney in Utah who provides affordable, high-

quality legal services. Eric regularly assists clients with various legal practice areas, including divorce, paternity, adoption, child support, child custody, alimony, adoption, and parent-time scheduling. For experienced legal assistance, contact Eric for a free 30-minute consultation at (801) 872-7398.

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