

TEN TOP TIPS TO SURVIVE THE HOLIDAYS FOR DIVORCED OR DIVORCING PARENTS

- 1. Confirm with your x-spouse all pick up and drop off details particularly the times well before the actual holiday begins. (Your lawyer can't get an emergency hearing with the judge on Dec. 23 to clarify whether or not you can pick up your kids on Christmas Eve at 8:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. or whether you have to wait until Christmas morning.)**
- 2. Confirm with your x-spouse any holiday travel plans and make sure that you have an agreement allowing you to travel with your kids before you buy your tickets. (Buying tickets in advance and expecting your x-spouse to consent to undisclosed travel plans will leave you standing at the airport alone.)**
- 3. Make sure that your x-spouse agrees to any changes or specific plans well in advance of the holiday. (If your x-spouse is difficult or you think she/he may change their mind, you MUST get a signed Court Order allowing you to make your changes. Otherwise, the Order currently in effect will control despite the fact that your x-spouse promised to accommodate you. Promises even when reduced to writing and signed by your x-spouse are unenforceable absent a court order.)**
- 4. Do not expect your x-spouse to let the kids take your Christmas presents home with them. (This is a clever way that x-spouses devise to minimize Christmas at your house.)**
- 5. Don't interpret your kids crying and pleading with you that they don't want to go home and wish to stay with you as their statement that life is terrible with your x-spouse. (Kids are smart and highly adept at manipulating their divorced parents, and are probably more concerned about leaving their Christmas presents behind than leaving you.)**
- 6. Don't expect the holidays to be the same as prior to your divorce. Both sides will have to make concessions.**
- 7. Don't try to one up your x-spouse and compete by making Christmas better at your house than at theirs. (Kids see through these tactics and it hurts them. Just make Christmas special with your kids in your own way. Create your own tradition. They will appreciate that.)**
- 8. Don't be alarmed by your x-spouse asking you to trade days during the kids' Christmas vacation to accommodate their extended family. (You may want to do the same. If not this year, then the next.)**

- 9. Allow your kids to call your x-spouse if they are with you on Christmas Day. (Kids love both of their parents, and it is no disrespect to you by their wanting to speak with the other parent on such a special day.)**
- 10. Roll with the punches. Not everything has a legal remedy.**
- 11. Give your kids money and help them buy Christmas presents for your x-spouse and their step family. (Not doing so, punishes your kids more than your x-spouse.)**