



CO-PARENTING AND THE HOLIDAYS

HELPING PARENTS BE
PARENTS SO KIDS CAN BE KIDS

WWW.NEWDAYSERVICES.ORG



ABOUT NEWDAY

Our Mission

To walk alongside parents, through classes and coaching, on their journey to becoming the role models their children need to grow up in a safe, loving home.

Our Vision

All children grow and thrive because parents work courageously to provide a safe, loving home.

Research shows that early childhood experiences affect behavior, biology and health; and when parents are supported in the parenting journey, children thrive. NewDay Services works with parents who may have children caught in the middle. It is easy to get lost in the often hostile environment caused by family break-ups and the stress of the holidays. We hope this e-book will offer some constructive ideas for co-parenting during the holidays. NewDay Services' co-parenting classes seek to build a bridge in the co-parenting relationship to better meet the needs of the children.

WHAT IF PARENTS,

had someone who understands what they're going through, someone who can provide solutions, someone who will not judge, someone who cares?

WHAT IF CHILDREN,

could count on their parents' love, support & cooperation with each other?

WHAT IF WE COULD CHANGE,

children's futures by empowering their parents today?

IF YOU'VE EVER ASKED THOSE
QUESTIONS, THEN YOU
UNDERSTAND WHY NEWDAY
EXISTS

CO-PARENTING AND THE HOLIDAYS

STUDIES SHOW THAT CHILDREN ADJUST MUCH MORE EASILY TO FAMILY BREAKUP WHEN BOTH PARENTS REMAIN PRESENT IN THEIR LIFE AND PROVIDE A LOVING, STABLE, AND CONSISTENT ENVIRONMENT FOR THEM TO GROW UP IN

Communicate with the Other Parent and Make a Plan

The holidays are a special time to spend with your kids and loved ones. However, this time of the year can be overwhelming. Going into the season without a plan, can lead to extra stress on you, and affect your children as well. Have a conversation with the other parent detailing schedules, rules across households, a gift list and budget.

Communication is key for a cohesive environment between each parent and household. Consistency, stability and routine make your children feel safe. Productive conversations between you and the other parent, lead to easier transitions during the holiday season. Co-parenting has a determining influence on how your children may form and work through their own relationships. Always remember that you are co-parenting for your kids' wellbeing and needs.

Have a Conversation with your Children

Plan a time to sit down and talk with your children about the schedule for the holidays. This conversation may be difficult to have with your children, especially if this is the first holiday co-parenting or a new schedule has been introduced. Remind your kids of how much you love them and stress that the significance of the schedule is a result of each parent wanting to spend time with them.

It is important to put aside your negative feelings about the other parent. Every interaction you have your child will see and internalize. Your children are resilient to a certain extent. Their emotions may be heightened and more vulnerable during this transition. Try to remain conflict-free when communicating with the other parent.

Plan New Traditions

Traditions that you did previously as a family, if the other parent is not present, could potentially create negative emotions and reactions from the kids. Starting new traditions may have the opposite effect and could make the holidays a more exciting time to look forward to for everyone. Creating new traditions will still be a transition, but hopefully it will create more positive emotions associated with the change itself.

Anticipate Changes

Life happens and may cause disruptions in the co-parenting plan. It is imperative to remain flexible and be willing to make compromises when necessary.

Schedule make-up days to account for those compromises to assure the integrity of the agreed time spent with each parent.

Try your best to put aside your feelings regarding the other parent when working through these situations. It is best for your children to see you and the other parent have as much of a healthy relationship as possible to help encourage them to have those healthy relationships one day as well as adults. Lead by example. If your child is feeling stress from the changes, they may communicate those feelings to you through negative behaviors. Your children may not understand or know how to effectively talk about their own

emotions and needs. Every child's reaction may be different and will show up by them engaging in different behaviors. Compassion and patience will work to discern what is the reason for those behaviors.

To help calm your child's' stress or anxieties talk with them and teach them ways to communicate how they are feeling. Remain consistent in how you handle these situations. When your child is feeling uncertain and scared, the consistency between parents and households will provide that feeling of safety for them.

Enjoy Family Time and Make Time for Yourself

This will be a significant life change for you and your kids. You may feel pressured to overcompensate for this transition with squeezing in every exciting event and activity you find. You and your children may just need a cozy night at home to decompress from the excitement and stress of the holiday season.

Prioritize taking care of yourself too. Listen to what you may need. Surround yourself with family, loved ones and friends to help keep your mind busy. Lean on them for support and use those times as an outlet for all of the stress, frustration and loneliness you may experience during this time.

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ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS TO HELP IMPROVE YOUR CO-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

- Never express a dislike about the other parent in front of your children.
- Speak positively about the access experience to your children.
- Have the children ready when they are to be picked up.
- Never pry information from your children.
- Keep an open mind. Do not take everything your child says at face value about what the other parent says or does.
- Keep each other informed about whereabouts, phone numbers, business trips, etc.
- Use the other parent as a first choice for baby-sitter.
- Put both parents' names on all forms at school or for extra-curricular activities. Give names and numbers of stepparents as well, in case of emergencies.
- Make arrangements to handle two homes. Extra ballet shoes, band t-shirts, soccer clothes, etc. should be at the other parent's home. If this is not possible, leave an extra key to your home with a friend or neighbor so that forgotten items can be accessed.
- Respect the privacy of the other parent's home when retrieving items.
- Always call the other parent - first - after you have contacted in cases of emergencies or problems at school. Stand united in these cases. Be an example to your kids.
- Have a written calendar of activities - keep the other parent informed (regardless of whether they show up or not).
- Don't always look for or assume the worst in the other parent. Remember, you thought enough of each other to have children, now think enough of each other to properly raise the children.
- Enlist the help of others - grandparents, aunts, uncles, and friends.
- Follow court ordered access schedules - do not use them as a weapon. Interfering with access hurts the child not the other parent. Access schedules are designed for the children's benefit.

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CONCLUSION

The holidays may make you feel overwhelmed and alone as a parent, but do not forget to reach out for help from loved ones and professionals. Remember to always give yourself grace. It will take time to learn and understand what works best for you and your kids, especially during the holidays. Consistency between parents and stability are crucial for children. Remain open and honest about this transition and stay focused on the goal of co-parenting, your kids. Any communication should be child-focused and conflict-free. We wish you a safe and happy holidays to you and your family.

Blessings,
NewDay Services



CO-PARENTING

Access without Conflict

GROW your influence | **COOPERATE** with difficult people |
RESOLVE stress and frustration | **RELIEVE** the tension in your child
caused by family break-up

Who can attend?

- ▶ All referrals welcome.
- ▶ Any party interested in improving their skills can register without a referral.
- ▶ All attendees receive a certificate of completion.

Where?

- ▶ All classes are held online via Zoom.

Cost?

- ▶ The cost of the 4-hour seminar-style class is \$40.00.

Refer a client



817.884.3800



<https://www.newdayservices.org/co-parenting.html>

Questions?

**Don
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