



¼ of  
separated  
families find  
arranging contact  
over Christmas  
difficult

## What do the children really want this Christmas?

Many separated families fall into a pattern of taking turns in having the children over Christmas. However, for those still in the early days of separation, making these arrangements can be fraught with emotion.

### Ideas on how to arrange contact over Christmas

#### Plan Ahead

A good idea would be to discuss both the Christmas and New Year periods well in advance to keep the festivities as stress-free as possible.

#### Children First

Always put the children's feelings first in all discussions. While you may want to split Christmas day think about whether this is fair on them, especially if long distances are involved. Children would rather be with family on Christmas day than being driven from house to house.

A popular choice for separated families is to celebrate Christmas twice; this often means Christmas Day with one parent and Boxing Day with the other, alternating each year.

Inform your children so they feel reassured knowing they'll be able to spend time with both parents. Be positive about the other parent as it is very difficult for a child to hear negative comments about their parents.

#### Contact When It Is Not Your Turn

If it is your turn to have the children a quick call, Skype or Facetime can be reassuring for both the children and the absent parent.

#### When You Cannot Agree

The greatest gift you can give your child is to love them more than you hate your ex-spouse; this allows you to make decisions in the best interests of your child.

#### Family Mediation

Trained mediators can help with discussing the situation, giving you both the opportunity to have your opinion heard and providing you with the tools to come up with a workable solution for all involved.

#### Legal Advice

If mediation fails then you can apply to court for a Child Arrangements Order. This sets out who has contact with the child, how often this will be and for how long, as well as the issue of who is the resident parent.

Court proceedings should always be a last resort-it can be a stressful and expensive experience. Before making an application for an order it's advisable to seek legal advice.

#### How We Can Help?

Our experienced family lawyers here at Osborne, Morris & Morgan will help guide you through the process and provide you with a greater understanding of your legal position. Call our friendly team on 01525 450520.

(Advertising Feature)



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