

## **Co-Parenting and Visitation During the Holidays After a Divorce**

Holidays can be an exciting time for families. They can include family gatherings, big meals, and other fun events. But they can also be a stressful time for parents and children when negotiating a visitation schedule or co-parenting plan resulting from a divorce. This can mean maintaining different schedules and children splitting their time between their mother's family and their father's family. This can lead to stress and aggravation for not only the parents, but for the children as well.

There are, however, ways to prevent this. When negotiating a parenting plan or visitation scheduling in the midst of a divorce, parents should consider not just the regular weekly visitation schedule or parenting plan, but holidays as well. When drafting a visitation schedule or parenting plan, the parents should consider what traditions, events, and functions, both the mother's family and the father's family have, and try to develop a visitation schedule or parenting plan that accommodates all of these factors, and allows the children to see both sides of their family and celebrate each holiday.

It's important to plan for all holidays. So in addition to planning for the major holidays, such as Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Christmas, New Years, and Easter, parents should think about the smaller, or shorter holidays, such as Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, and other "one day" holidays. Parents should also remember to plan for extended school breaks, such as winter vacation and summer vacation.

By placing a parenting plan or visitation scheduling in your Separation Agreement that includes holidays, it provides some structure and predictability for everyone involved. That way parents can plan special functions or outings for each holiday. This also makes each holiday less stressful for the children, because the children will know in advance with whom they will spend their holiday. When a holiday involves extended family, it also helps the extended family plan any special functions and know whether to include the children in the planning.

Each family is different and plans for these holidays in different ways. What is most important when drafting a parenting plan or visitation schedule is to make sure it works for your family, including you, your former spouse, your children, and also your extended family. Think about what your family usually does for each holiday. Consider any traditions or special functions you and your family may attend for each holiday. That way you will have a parenting plan or visitation schedule that suits your family's needs.

**Do you need assistance drafting a holiday parenting plan or visitation schedule? Do you need to modify your parenting plan or visitation schedule to include holidays? Here at Amaral & Associates we offer free consultations and have over twenty years experience with family law matters. Please contact us for a free consultation (617) -539-1010, or visit our website at [www.amarallaw.com](http://www.amarallaw.com).**