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if (document.addEventListener) { document.addEventListener("DOMContentLoaded",
window.print(), false); } // for Internet Explorer (using conditional comments) /*@cc_on @*/
/*@if (@_win32) document.write(""); var script = document.getElementById("__ie_onload");
script.onreadystatechange = function() { if (this.readyState == "complete") { window.print();
// call the onload handler } }; /*@end @*/
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PLANNING IN ADVANCE IS A MUST FOR STRESS FREE CO-PARENTING

Posted by: kstewart in *Untagged* on Aug 10, 2009

Juggling holidays, work and kids schedules for most families is challenging but for single parents it can be daunting. Now more than ever, as divorce and extended families have become the norm, parents look for tips on how to co-parent stress free.

First and foremost set aside your ego and personal battles.□ □

The holiday season whether Christmas, thanksgiving or the summer are often a sensitive reminder of wishful thinking of what otherwise could have been, but redefining a new kind of celebration is a recipe for success and cooperation. Holidays are wrapped in tradition and positively framed will help children establish confidence, foundation and trust in their new kind of family. Different is only “different” it is not worst. Creating exciting new kinds of traditions can be fun and the seeds for new wonderful beginnings.

Plan and agree on a holiday rotation schedule well in advance.□

What works best for most families is to rotate one year with one and the next with the other. Some holidays like summer you can obviously split and share. For older children you may even

decide to split the summer in half, but for younger children a two week block with one parent is likely enough for a holiday with one but not too long away from the other. For holiday's like Christmas, try splitting this time in half – perhaps with the first half up to and including Christmas day and the second half starting on the 26th to include New Years and ending when the children return to school. Then of course the next year rotate the other way. This works much better then splitting Christmas during the 24th or the 25th which most often causes stress for the parents, the children and extended families.

Many parents who get along very well will often prefer to avoid set schedules but over time realize the stress this can cause. It is best to have a well-defined schedule that allows for flexibility rather than to have no schedule at all. Also consider how much money you can save by being able to book trips well in advance. Plus in many cases you need to book up to 8 months just to get reservations. If you know what your schedule is in advance you actually award yourself more flexibility. Remember fail to plan – plan to fail.

Keep communication between you and your ex short, respectful and to the point.

While for some, co-parenting may be easier then been married, remember you are divorced and therefore communication with your ex should honor these boundaries. Email is the best form of communication. You have a record of agreements and misunderstanding is less likely to happen when things are in writing. Plus you avoid unnecessary button pushing.

Be open and honest with your children.

Children thrive best when you confirm rather than deny their intuition. Be truthful but always be age appropriate. What is an appropriate conversation with a 16 year old maybe not so with a 10 year old. Keep your negative opinions to yourself and remember when you criticize the other parent you are in essence attacking one half of your children. Just because they may have been an unsuitable spouse, does not make them an unsuitable parent.

Take time for yourself.

When planning holidays as a single parent with your children, try and plan some time for yourself as well. Maintaining balance as a single parent can be challenging yet taking time for yourself will make you a better you and a better you will make a better parent. So indulge a bit of time just for you.

Take yourself and your situation a little less seriously.

Everything almost always works out in the end, yet we often spend wasted time and energy worrying about things that never happen.

Have fun and be the Best you can be.