

How to have a good Christmas when your ex partner has the kids

Rex



Christmas can be very difficult without your kids

Christmas can be a tough time for [separated parents](#). A very small number of do manage to spend the day together, but this is not always possible.

Inevitably one parent will be without the children for all or some of [Christmas Day](#).

Not having your kids for Christmas is tough, whether it's the first time or it happens every year.

Preparing yourself for this eventuality can seem very daunting.

We worked with [Be StepWise](#), a site offering expert advice for parents, The International Family Law Group LLP, and Parent Coach Agnes Bamford to write some useful tips to make everything a bit less stressful.

If you have any advice for [separated parents](#) spending Christmas without their children let us know in the form at the bottom.

1. Set expectations early – yours and your children's



If it's your first Christmas apart create new pre Christmas traditions with the kids

Arrange early on with your former partner where the children will be for Christmas and start making plans.

Arrange timings and dates and communicate this to the children in an encouraging and supportive way even if you don't feel like doing so! It is important for the children to know that it is okay with you if they spend their Christmas time with their other parent.

Don't tell them you would prefer the children to be with you, how upset you will be, how you will miss them opening their presents on Christmas morning or what they will miss by not being with you at Christmas. It will be a difficult time for you but don't pass this to the children as they will worry about it and regret not being with you.

2. Create an alternative Christmas for you



Why not go away with friends for Christmas?

You might want to plan to do something on the day that doesn't involve children. Being with lots of children could make you upset and make you miss your children more. Some decide to spend Christmas with their own parents or family which can be an opportunity to get closer to them in a way that hasn't been possible in the past when the focus around Christmas has been on the children.

It could also be an opportunity to go away with friends or to wake up leisurely on Christmas morning. You choose what kind of Christmas you want. Focus on having a relaxing and fun time.

You could even look in to volunteering on Christmas Day.

3. Have a 'second Christmas' with the kids



Baking your own Christmas decorations is a fun activity to do with the kids

Celebrate Christmas on a different day. In some countries the main day at Christmas for celebrations and festivities is on Christmas Eve so you could make that the main event, or even Boxing Day. The children will love it – they get to have two celebrations – and probably two sets of presents.

4. Shift your perspective to what's going on for your children

Birmingham Post & Mail



Try not to get upset in front of the children- this will only make it worse for them

You are bound to be upset if your children are away from you for Christmas for the first time. Remember this is a change of routine for them too, so focus on their happiness. Christmas is a huge deal for children – and seeing it from their perspective will also help you to be positive and focus on them and not on your sadness. Try to put on a happy and brave face – for them.

Don't be afraid to cry – a good sob can make us feel better, but not in front of the children.

5. Enjoy your 'me-time'

Getty



"Silence at last. And no rubber ducks in here"

It's rewarding but also exhausting to be a parent. Use this Christmas without your children as an opportunity to focus on yourself.

Watch what you want on Netflix, have a bath without being interrupted, have a lie-in in the mornings, spend a whole day in your pyjamas, stay up reading til 3am. Do the things you never seem to have time for inbetween school runs and packed lunches.

6. Talk to your children while they're away



Skype your kids on Christmas Day

Make an arrangement to phone or Skype them on Christmas morning – if possible to see them open a present from you which they have taken with them to ‘open with you’ via Skype.

Even if you do not get on well with your, ex don’t undermine anything the children have done or plan to do whilst they are away from you.

If you have any advice for parents spending Christmas without the children let us know in the form below: