fmni

family mediation
NORTHERN IRELAND

Co-Parenting at Christmas

Free online self- help tips and tools

- **It's important that children are reassured that they are spending time with you both.**

Let your children know, with age appropriate language that you will agree the arrangements together.

- **Keep your discussions structured and not with children present.**

Avoid making demands.

Be conscious of tone of voice and try not to begin discussions by text or social media as this can be open to misinterpretation.

- **Explore what compromises you both can make.**

You will both need to be prepared to give as well as take. If you ex is having the kids this Christmas, can you agree that you will have them next Christmas? Can the children share time with both of you over the holiday season?

- **Agree the practical arrangements.**

Who will be picking up the children from where and at what time?

Discuss what back up plans you will put in place in case bad weather disrupts your travel plans.

- **Are there only certain dates when they can see extended family or is there flexibility?**

Try to put yourself in your ex's position. How would you feel if you were them?

- **Remember there are no set rules, focus on what is in your child's best interests.**

This may be age dependent , if you have young children.

Will they find it difficult to be away from either of you for an extended period of time?
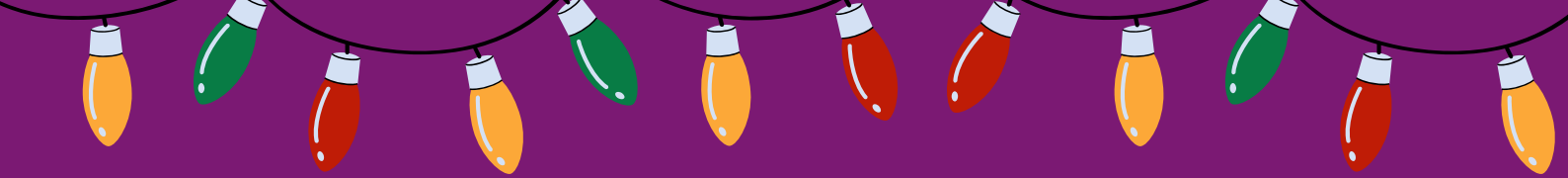
- **Discuss phone call and facetime/ skype times.**

When can you call and who will make that call?

- **Consider creating a joint calendar so that you are both clear on what has been agreed.**

There are a number of online and other materials to help with this.

- **If you're not having your children at Christmas, consider arranging another Christmas celebration with them.**

If you are struggling with communication and arranging contact, consider is there time to access family mediation to try and resolve the issue with a trained family mediator who will empower you both to be decision makers in a child focused process.

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