

INSIGHTS + NEWS

Tis' the Season: Holiday Co-Parenting During a Pandemic

BY LYNETTE PACZKOWSKI • DECEMBER 2, 2020

As he did at the start of the pandemic, the Chief Justice of the Probate & Family Court [issued an open letter to parents](#), encouraging them “to continue cooperating with each other to ensure that children have safe, healthy parenting time” throughout the holiday season. While the coronavirus pandemic presents new and unique challenges, they are not insurmountable. With some additional planning, coordination, and cooperation, families can navigate this holiday season together.

Here are 5 key takeaways from Chief Justice Casey's letter:

1. If you have an existing holiday parenting plan, try to maintain it. If it needs to be modified or if you do not yet have a holiday parenting plan, start creating one now. Do not wait until the last minute.
2. Be honest and open with each other about any planned travel, the location and size of any holiday gatherings, and the health and safety precautions in place for those gatherings and the people attending them, especially your child(ren).
3. Do not use the pandemic as an excuse to withhold or modify holiday parenting time, but if you believe that your co-parent's plans expose the child(ren) to unnecessary health and safety risks, have those conversations now. Discuss whether some of those concerns can be reasonably alleviated by minimizing travel, reducing the size of gatherings, wearing masks when not actively eating or drinking, etc.
4. Seek input and guidance from the child(ren)'s pediatrician or other medical providers about how to have a safe holiday.
5. If needed, consult with a mediator, a family therapist, or a lawyer to help facilitate these conversations and resolve any holiday-related issues.