



# The 3 Essential C's to Help You Co-Parent During the Holidays

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This month we celebrate the Easter holidays, and for many people, this is an opportunity to connect with family and loved ones and create memories with those who matter most.

Unfortunately for two separated parents, this can also be a time that causes additional stress and anxiety.

Despite the best intentions, and as a result of Covid-19, some co-parenting arrangements can come under scrutiny during the holidays if one parent wants to spend more time with the children to make up for extended time away due to restrictions and lockdowns.

If you find yourself in this situation and arrangements are becoming challenging, remember the three C's to avoid potential conflict and enjoy the celebrations as co-parents:

**1. Communicate** - Talk with your former partner in advance about sharing the days, or trying to work out a specific holiday solution that supports your kids. If necessary, keep a dedicated communication book or share an online calendar / app that outlines the agreed events, dates and times, so everyone is across the arrangement.

**2. Connect** - If circumstances change suddenly or the new arrangement has caused challenges, try encouraging your child to maintain the connection with your former partner. They could email, phone or Facetime their other parent during their time with you. This shows support and positivity towards the relationship and places the child's needs above your own.

**3. Care** - If the separation and time away from your child are causing you to feel lonely or anxious, use the time to care for yourself. Schedule time with friends, book a massage, take a short trip of your own or spend time doing more things that you love to do. Taking care of yourself during this time will allow you to remain positive and supportive, and to be a good role model for positive mental health for your child.

At the end of the day, it's important to elevate the children's needs above one's own. Maintain an open line of communication and show flexibility. This will allow children to feel loved, cared for and connected to both parents and extended families.



## Need help? Meet the NQFTC team

NQ Family Therapy Centre specialises in psychology and family therapy committed to improving the mental health and well-being of children, adolescents, young adults, couples and families through a multidisciplinary family system approach.

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