

Family Life **POST DIVORCE**

Family life post-divorce is not without its challenges, and a pertinent issue during the holiday season is the custody arrangement. When Christmas, Thanksgiving, birthdays, or school vacations are approaching, parents may need to discuss and agree on specific and clear visitation schedules.

Many parents find that it helps to alternate Christmas and school break vacations; for example, the child stays with one parent on even-numbered years, and with the other parent on odd-numbered years. This arrangement may also be suitable for other holidays, such as Thanksgiving.

On birthdays or special occasions, some parents prefer that both parties have equal access to their child, whereas other parents adopt a similar strategy of alternating year by year. During other school summer vacation periods, you may decide to allocate blocks of time to the parent who does not have primary custody; for example, ten days in June and ten days in August.

In developing a custody agreement that encompasses holiday visitation, it is beneficial to work in collaboration with an attorney who specializes in custody litigation. Composing a clear, fair and legally binding custody agreement will ensure that your legal rights as a parent are both protected and respected.

Planning is everything. Families are stressed by the holidays and holiday-related events. If you feel that there's a need to return to court to modify a parenting plan, take action early. Don't wait. The courts are functioning but under tremendous stress in their effort to process cases. Consequently, there are delays in getting on court calendars and in having your matters heard.



About Arlene:

Engaged for decades in the Northern California legal community, Arlene D. Kock is a past member of the Alameda County Bar Association (ACBA) Board of Directors. She served on their Attorney Referral Panel for many years and was the past chair of their Ethics and Civility Committee. In her capacity on that committee, Arlene was instrumental in assisting the team in preparing and creating the ACBA statement of professionalism and civility, a policy that is expected to be adhered to today by the court and litigants. She is currently a member of the ACBA and the Contra Costa County Bar Association.



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