

What do children really want for Christmas?

Christmas is a very religious time for some and not for others but for all it is a time for families being together.

For parents that have recently split this time is incredibly difficult for the main reason of when they are going to see their children but also what can they buy their children that is going to be better than the other parent. As you know I am not interested in the parents but the interest of the child – their thoughts and feelings.

The children will hopefully want to spend time with both parents unless one parent has turned the child against the other. They will want to receive presents from both parents but want them to be thoughtful and full of love – not like the parents have been competing to give the biggest/best/more expensive one and they will want to be involved in the planning and preparation of the special day.

They will have concerns about Christmas so parents please listen and address their fears. These may be:

- Why can't we all spend Christmas together?
- Where will I sleep on Christmas Eve?
- How will I spend Christmas day?
- Who else will be there?
- Can it be just you and me?
- Will I have to cook lunch (if I am at dad's – he can't cook)?
- What is expected of me (dress, schedule etc)?
- Can my brothers/sisters stay with me even though they don't like mum/dad?
- Will I still be able to do the special activities I like to do at Christmas with mum/dad?

Can we have day without any arguing?

They will want Christmas to be a time of togetherness, which can only happen if separation was amicable. If not, you will need to discuss options of how they can spend Christmas using the knowledge you have of yours and your ex's movements. If there is only one option for the child to spend Christmas with one parent explain the reasons why.

If you are both around ask the children how they would like to spend their day and the rest of their holidays and try and accommodate some of their wishes where you can. Think about the practicalities of how they are going to get from one location to the next. You don't want to arrange Christmas Eve with mum and then Christmas breakfast with dad. If the child wants to have you all to themselves – is it possible for you to do something special just the two of you for part of the day and then be with others for the rest of it.

When it comes to receiving presents - get them to write down what presents they want from mum and those they want from dad with the mindset that one parent may not have the same finances available. The each parent will know what to buy and it will alleviate competition and possible bribery!