

7 Tips for Surviving Father's Day After Separation and Divorce

Father's Day after separation and divorce can be rough – especially for dads who will be apart from their kids. Father's Day is different when you are separated or divorced, but “different” doesn't have to mean “dreadful”. Here are seven tips from the editors of *Divorce Magazine* to help dads beat the blues on Father's Day.



Family-centered holidays like Father's Day can exacerbate feelings of loss, failure, grief, or anger for newly separated and divorced dads: those who will be apart from their kids for the first time on this special day may be dreading it. Children may also be missing treasured Father's Day rituals – like bringing Dad breakfast in bed, helping to wash his car, and the whole family going out for dinner at his favorite restaurant.

“Take a moment to reflect on the fact that dads have a responsibility to set a good example for their children every day – including on Father's Day,” says Dan Couvrette, Publisher of *Divorce*

Magazine. “Fathers should celebrate in whatever way is meaningful and satisfying to them; whether or not they're with their children, dads should mindfully work at being an inspiration for their kids.”

Father's Day is different when you are separated or divorced, but “different” doesn't have to mean “dreadful”. Fathers can choose to surrender to sadness, or they can make an effort to find ways to enjoy the day – whether or not their kids will be with them.

Here are seven tips from the editors of *Divorce Magazine* to help dads beat the blues on Father's Day.

- 1) **Plan Ahead.** This is by far the most important thing a father can do to ensure that the day is fun – or at least bearable – for himself and his children. Having a plan for the day will reduce uncertainty and stress for everyone involved.
- 2) **Communicate with the Other Parent.** If it's their mother's turn to have the children this weekend, fathers should schedule a time to discuss how the day/weekend might work. Perhaps the mother would be happy to trade weekends; if that won't work, perhaps some or all of the day on Sunday might be possible.
- 3) **Talk to the Children.** Parents should tell their children how the day is going to be handled. The father should also share what would make the day “perfect” for them instead of making

- their kids guess. In many cases, the mother may have provided prompts for the kids: reminding them that Daddy likes to sleep in or that he prefers waffles over pancakes.
- 4) **Create New Traditions.** Even if a father has fond memories of past Father's Days, he can still choose to create entirely new traditions with his kids – without Mom being present. Dads should think about things they have really enjoyed doing with the children – whether that's a trip to a theme park, movie theater, zoo, or museum – and make that fun outing a new Father's Day tradition.
 - 5) **Share the Day with Other Single Parents.** Fathers can choose to do this whether or not they have their kids with them. Other single fathers who have “been there, done that” can provide coaching and support to newly-divorced dads. Fathers who don't have any single dads in their social circle should do some Google-searching for local support groups and events.
 - 6) **Plan a Virtual Get-Together.** If there's no way a father can be with his children on Father's Day, he could schedule a video visit via Skype, Facebook, or Google Hangout. Then he can spend the rest of the day golfing, fishing, or whatever else he enjoys doing.
 - 7) **Include Stepfathers:** Stepfathers should communicate their wishes clearly with their wives regarding their expectations for the day. If stepfathers are involved with the day-to-day child rearing, then they deserve to have a special day, too. If the stepchildren are going to be with their father for the holiday, seize the opportunity to enjoy a romantic, kid-free weekend together.

Launched simultaneously *Divorce Magazine* in 1996, DivorceMagazine.com is one of the oldest and most respected websites devoted entirely to divorce-related issues. The magazine and website both offer practical help and information – from child support to visitation, mediation to litigation, divorce recovery to dating after divorce. The online directory of divorce professionals and geo-targeted FAQs can assist separated individuals to find local help and advice. The magazine and website are owned by [Divorce Marketing Group](#), which also publishes *Family Lawyer Magazine* and FamilyLawyerMagazine.com, as well as a number of other related publications and websites.