**How Are Holiday Parenting Time Schedules Determined in the Chicago area?**

If you are currently going through a divorce in Chicago and have children from the marriage, you are likely spending a considerable amount of time thinking about issues of parental responsibilities and [parenting time](https://www.familylawadvocate.com/divorce/child-custody/). Even when parents can come to an agreement about parenting time and can work together on a parenting plan, it can be difficult to know how to handle holiday parenting time schedules. Given that the holidays—whether it is Thanksgiving, Christmas, Independence Day, or your child’s birthday—tend to be emotional times for parents and their kids, it is important to understand how holiday schedules will be arranged in your Chicago area divorce.

We often hear questions about whether the holiday parenting time schedule must remain the same from year to year, as well as concerns about how the parenting time schedule can be adjusted in the event there is a last-minute holiday need to shift travel plans. We will provide some more information about how holiday parenting time schedules are determined for families in the Chicago area.

**Parenting Plans and Holiday Schedules for Chicago Families**

Under the Illinois Marriage and Dissolution of Marriage Act ([750 ILCS 5/](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?ActID=2086&ChapterID=59&SeqStart=8300000&SeqEnd=10000000)), parents can come to an agreement about both parental responsibilities and parenting time, which can become official through a court-approved parenting plan. Even when parents cannot come to an agreement, the court will allocate parental responsibilities and make decisions about parenting time. How does a parenting plan or an allocation judgment typically handle holiday schedules?

The courts recognize that schedules often change during the holidays and that parents need to make different plans for spending time with their kids. In some situations, parents plan trips across the country to spend holidays with friends or other family members, and they need to plan in advance for travel with their children. In other situations, parents might have different work schedules during the holidays, leading to the need for a different holiday parenting time schedule. Given the unique travel and work schedules surrounding holidays, courts typically sign off on parenting plans that have two different schedules: a regular parenting time schedule, and a separate holiday parenting time schedule.

**What Do Holiday Parenting Time Schedules Typically Look Like?**

There are different types of holiday parenting time schedules that families in the Chicago area often use, depending upon the specific needs of the family and the child. Often, parenting time will be “alternating” during holidays, and based on odd and even years. For instance, the holiday parenting schedule might look like this:

* Halloween: parent 1 has even years and parent 2 has odd years;
* Thanksgiving: parent 1 has odd years and parent 2 has even years;
* Christmas Eve: parent 1 has even years and parent 2 has odd years;
* Christmas Day: parent 1 has odd years and parent 2 has even years;
* New Year’s Eve: parent 1 has even years and parent 2 has odd years; and
* Independence Day: parent 1 has odd years and parent 2 has even years.

We have not listed all major holidays above, but the list above gives you a sense of how this type of parenting time schedule works. In some situations, parents might agree that one parent will always have the child for Christmas Eve, for instance, while the other parent always has the child for Christmas Day. If families practice different religions, one parent might always have the child on religious holidays such as Christmas and Easter, while the other parent always spends holidays such as Hanukkah and Passover with the child. Parents typically alternate years for the child’s birthday.

For Memorial Day, Labor Day, and other holidays that fall on a Monday, holiday parenting time schedules typically extend the parent with the weekend parenting time into Monday. However, parents can come to a different agreement as long as the court approves.

**Contact a Chicago area Parenting Time Lawyer**

If you have questions about holiday parenting time schedules, a Chicago area parenting time lawyer can assist you. [Contact M. Scott Gordon & Associates](https://www.familylawadvocate.com/contact-us/) for more information.

