

It used to be that parents of the bride were expected to bear the entire cost of the wedding. That's no longer true.



Only a quarter of all weddings are now paid for exclusively by the bride's parents, while up to seventy percent of weddings are paid for either by the couple or some combination of the bride's and groom's parents. Whatever the division of expenses you settle on, the key to avoiding misunderstandings is to have a clear discussion at the start of the planning process regarding how much each party is prepared to contribute:

- Each party can contribute a fixed amount. "In this case," says one experienced wedding consultant, "it's important for both sets of parents to let the couple know in advance how much they are willing to contribute."

- The different parties can offer to pay for certain aspects of the celebration.

- The bride's and groom's parents can split the costs; alternatively, each set of parents and the couple can each pay one-third of the cost.

- Finally, it's increasingly common for the bride and groom to pay for the whole wedding themselves.

Mother's Etiquette Alert:

Don't keep mum about money. As parents of the bride, the key to ironing out the financial details of your daughter's wedding is for you and your spouse to communicate openly with the couple at the very start of the process regarding exactly what sort of monetary contribution

you're willing and able to make toward the wedding. You, as a mom, can be a tremendous help simply by initiating the budget conversation, if it hasn't come up already. Keep the discussion within your immediate family, however; the idea that the groom's parents might contribute to the cost of the wedding as well is best broached by the groom directly (and privately) with his parents.