

10 Tips for Stepparents Entering a Blended Family

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So, you're getting remarried and both you and your new spouse have children? Wondering what to expect? Picturing reruns of *The Brady Bunch*? We hate to break it to you, but not every blended family gets along as well as they did. However, ***there are some things you can do to help make the transition into a blended family easier.***

1. Get to Know the Kids

You probably won't fall in love with your new spouse's children overnight. ***Feelings of true affection will take time.*** It's important to spend time with them, in real life situations, so you can really learn who they are—and they can learn who you are. Instead of always doing fun things together, try doing some mundane, everyday things. Run errands, cook dinner at home, go shopping. ***The more 'real' you are with each other, the easier it will be to get used to one another.***

2. Change Up Your Parenting Before You Move in Together

Talk with your partner and decide on how you'll parent. ***Be united in your decisions,*** as it will make for a ***smoother transition.*** Make sure you sit down with all the children before you move in together ***to alert them to any changes,*** this way they won't be mad at your spouse (and his/her children won't be mad at you).

3. Insist Upon Respect

Don't allow for ultimatums, and ***don't allow your children to put you in a position where they ask you to choose between them and your spouse.*** Insist everyone be treated with respect.

4. Temper Your Expectations

While you may be excited about your new marriage and the joining of your two families, the children may be less enthused. Your kids, and your partner's, probably won't return all of your love and affection **right away**. Just take it one day at a time. Just provide them with **the support they need, communicate with them openly, and they'll come around**.

5. Bond with Them

Bond with your children by thinking of their needs, and providing for them. **Kids need to feel loved, safe, valued, encouraged, and heard**. Keep this in mind in your everyday communications.

6. Let the Children Set the Pace

All children are different; let them show you how **slowly**, or **quickly**, they'd like to get to know you (and you them). Some children are more gregarious, while some children are shy. Take the temperature of the situation and allow them to set the pace.

7. Set Routines

One of the best ways for both parents to settle into a blended family is through routine. **Setting routines and creating new rituals can help the entire family bond**. Start new rituals like Saturday night movie night, or Tuesday game night, or even one night a week where the kids pick dinner. Fun changes like can encourage communication, bonding and make life together fun.

8. Establish Trust

It's important to establish trust when blending your families. Children typically feel unsure of their place in a new family. While you don't want to be seen as a 'friend' instead of a parent, it is important to show your new step-children that **you aren't trying to replace their mother or father**. Be there for them to talk to, but also make sure you're enforcing the rules. **Be consistent**. They want boundaries as much as you want to set them; they just don't always show it.

9. Work with the Entire Family

Your new stepchildren will be happier in your home if you've connected with **both** of their biological parents. Make sure there's **open communication**, and **all** parents are involved. This will help you work towards a more positive relationship with your stepchildren, and your spouse's ex.

10. Communicate

Communication in any family is important, but in a new, blended family, it's even more important to keep that communication flowing. Make sure your communication is open and direct. Don't talk through a spouse or child. Always speak to your children, treating them with respect. Communicate often; **let all the children know they can come to you with anything**. Don't let anyone bottle their emotions, make sure everyone discusses any problems or issues they may have, and make sure to **address any conflict positively**. Everyone should **listen respectfully** to one another, **without judgment**. A family game night or dinner together each evening is a perfect time and place to communicate.

Salt Lake City, Utah Wall & Wall Attorneys at Law Can Help

No matter what you do, entering a blended family can be difficult. Following these tips can make the transition easier, but remember, there will be ups and downs. **Stay positive and keep trying to connect**. It'll happen! If you have questions, our Salt Lake City, Utah divorce and family law firm at **Wall & Wall Attorneys at Law** can help. We have a combined **190 years of experience** in issues such as custody, child support, alimony and more. Contact our experienced SLC attorneys today for a **free case evaluation**.