

How to Blend Your Step-Family

Approximately [65% of remarriages](#) include children from past marriages, which means the challenges of a past family system sometimes cross over to a new one. Knowing what to expect in a blended family can help family members address issues before they spiral out of control, or avoid these problems altogether.

Overcoming the Challenges

The biological and the step-parent must spend the necessary time communicating together regarding family rules and expectations they each have for the family. Likely, there are different lifestyles to seek to integrate. A good goal is for each parent to accept they will have to compromise to make the family functioning healthy. Communicating as a couple and also with the kids is essential in order to establish clear rules and expectations in this new family. Issues such as chores, discipline and schedules need to be discussed and clearly communicated.

It is also recommended to schedule regular [family fun nights](#) in order to create unity and build relationships. Family fun nights will create bonds that will benefit the family and help reduce the severity of any issues that arise due to becoming a blended family. Everyone can contribute ideas of possible fun activities to do together.

Connecting with each child

Bio and step parents need to schedule individual time with each kid. Here there are two goals: the first is to do something fun together and thus strengthen relationship. Secondly, is to create an open atmosphere in which the adult can hear from the child/teen about any concerns they are having in their life or in the new family.

In the same way that it is important for parents to meet together to strategize on parenting, it may be beneficial for the kids in the family to meet together and formulate their input on helpful family ideas.

Space

Personal and family space is likely an issue for many blended families, as there can be territorial issues for both children and adults. Compromise and cooperation are the main targets for families to aim for.

Parenting styles

Many blended families run into issues when it comes to different parenting styles. One parent may be laid back and lenient, while the other one is very strict. When one of the parents is out of the home, the other one is in charge, so when discipline styles don't mesh, the children may suffer from parental inconsistency. This is an important area for parents to brainstorm together about with the goal of a consistent parental expectation. Parents do not need to reject their own personality style but they do need to consider the unhealthy effect of parental inconsistency upon the kids.

Many step-families do blend well. The blended family actually can provide more opportunities for personal growth, achievement and enjoyment. By emphasizing cooperation and compromise for the betterment of the family, kids can learn the important life skill of teamwork.

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