



Building Stepfamilies That Work®

Introducing Your Partner to Your Children

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- Don't introduce your new partner to your children until you have a committed relationship.
- When you decide to introduce your new partner to your children, pick a casual or an informal event where the others in attendance and/or the focal activity will take from the awkwardness of the situation. If possible, arrange it as a "coincidental" meeting. Keep it brief.
- When you first introduce your new partner, introduce them as an acquaintance or a friend.
- Don't provide your "friend" with the specifics of the children's living circumstances during this meeting.
- After the "friend" leaves, continue in your activity with your children.
- Repeat this type of "chance" encounter several times, extending the time you and your partner spend together with each meeting.
- When the time is right, suggest an outing where your partner can join you and your kids in an activity that is of common interest (e.g., walking the dog in the park).
- Don't quiz your kids on how they feel about your "friend".
- If the kids ask if this person is "more" than an acquaintance, be honest.
- Repeat this procedure to meet your partner's children.
- Once your partner has become integrated into an activity with you and your children, plan an activity where the partner's children can join in too. Remember, it will be less awkward if there is an activity involved, and other people are around.
- Allowing the kids to bring along one of their friends will also help prevent awkwardness; and may make it a lot easier to convince the children to attend.
- Keep your expectations in check. Remember, your primary goal at this stage (which lays a foundation for good relationships in the future), is simply to introduce the children to the adults, and the children to one another; not necessarily to have them interact.

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