

# 10 TIPS FOR *Blended* FAMILIES



FIRST  
things  
FIRST





# Remarrying

WITH KIDS  
CAN CREATE A  
**COMPLEX DYNAMIC**

Expectations  
may not be  
clear, and parents,  
stepparents, and  
children may all  
have a hard time  
knowing how to behave.


Ex-spouses and new spouses  
impact what happens in each  
household, so maintaining balance can be  
frustrating.



IS IT ANY SURPRISE THAT THESE TYPES OF ISSUES CREATE

*stress* AND  
*conflict?*





"Most couples enter into remarriage with a tremendous amount of expectation and hope... yet in most instances, they are naive about the trip they are about to take."

**-RON DEAL**

Author of The  
Smart Stepfamily:  
Seven Steps  
to a Healthy Family

# Believe

IT OR NOT...

transitioning into a  
stepfamily requires some  
prep work.

**SO HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER  
WHEN MAKING THAT LEAP TOGETHER**



# Nurture AND COMMUNICATE

ACCORDING TO A STUDY OF MORE THAN  
50,000 STEPFAMILY COUPLES...

**Maintaining fun** in marriage is the  
number 5 predictor of a high-quality  
stepcouple relationship.

**Good communication &  
conflict skills** were the  
number two and three  
predictors of  
successful remarriages.



# 2 KEEP Perspective

THIS IS NEW FOR EVERYONE,  
SO EXPECT TO FEEL LOST.

Seek understanding and don't force people to blend, because it **takes time**. It may even take years for your family to really unite, but it's better than causing a lot of frustration by moving too quickly. **Be patient** with the process and have a "slow-cooker" mentality.

HAVE A COUPLES

## Check-up

The checkup provides an accurate view of your relationship. It not only tells you where you are and helps you decide where you want to go, but it gives you directions to get there. You can access the Couple Checkup and other resources at <https://smartstepfamilies.com>



A background image featuring vibrant yellow and pink flowers, possibly ranunculus, with delicate petals and green foliage. The flowers are arranged in a way that they appear to be floating or blooming against a dark background.

# Talk

WITH OTHERS

Before you begin, you might want to educate yourself about stepfamily living. Ask other stepfamilies about their experiences and the things that caught them by surprise. Find out how they handled the early days.

# BE A Team

It's helpful if parents and stepparents can seek consistency in household rules and have lots of parenting meetings. In the first year, it's a great idea for stepparents to focus on building relationships with the children. Be sure to move at their pace, not yours.



# Helping THE KIDS

Since this is also foreign territory for children, prepare them to expect a variety of feelings and encourage them to talk about it. Discuss what to call one another (e.g., stepdad or "George") and decide how to introduce one another in public.

Understand that kids may have different names/terms for stepfamily members depending on who's in the room. For example, they may call a stepfather "Dad" unless their biological dad is physically present until relationships stabilize.

*Follow their lead*





# TRADITIONS MATTER

For sure, keep some old ones (for the kids), but also create a new one in your first year. Put intentional thought and effort into creating those new family traditions, because traditions tell us who we are and where we belong.

## VISITATION SCHEDULES

Forcing kids to lose time with the other household will inadvertently invite kids to resent your relationship. Keeping consistent schedules will lessen stress for everyone involved. Arrange weekends and holidays clearly and simply, so the kids can adjust and not feel pressured.

## STAYING CONNECTED

Try to maintain old friendships and social connections. If necessary, reconnect to church or another community group. Find a mentor to help you through your first year or join an organization where you can find tools and encouragement.



# 10 *Bumps* EXPECT IN THE ROAD

Stepfamily life can be challenging,  
so don't expect perfection.  
Don't overreact.

Things may get difficult,  
but stick together and  
work for the future  
as a family.



# MORE RESOURCES

BLENDING FAMILIES IS A NEVER-ENDING ADVENTURE,  
SO HERE ARE SOME MORE RESOURCES AND TOOLS TO  
HELP YOU ON YOUR JOURNEY:

"Making Stepfamilies Work"

American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org>

"Blended Family and Step-parenting Tips"

Helpguide.org

<https://www.helpguide.org>

"The Smart Blended Marriage"

Focus on the Family

<https://www.focusonthefamily.com>

"What Your Child is Experiencing When You Remarry"

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://www.healthychildren.org>

