

Tips on Blending Families

Considering blending your family? Here are some things to think about:

1. **Look before you leap.** Just because your children seem to like that person you're spending time with doesn't mean they will accept him as a new daddy or her as a new mommy.
2. **Consider the ages of the children.** Are their ages close together, causing them to compete? Sometimes it's easier to wait until the children leave home before blending a family.
3. **Children idealize deceased parents.** Loyalty issues for children are much more intense in the case of a deceased parent. Realize that a friendship with the child should be the goal, rather than a replacement of that parent as a new mommy or daddy.

Already in a blended family? Here are some practical tips:

1. **As a couple, ALWAYS stand together!** There is no "yours" or "mine", but only "ours". Don't let the children drive a wedge between you – you have to be one unit to provide stability for your children, as they are most likely concerned about whether this marriage will last.
2. **Always talk things through with everyone concerned.** Have family meetings where each member's voice can be heard.
3. **Don't make decisions that affect others in the family without checking with them first.**
4. **Respect each other's personal property.** Don't touch other people's belongings without their permission.
5. **Each family member's individuality is important.** Each member should be treated as an individual, worthy of respect.
6. **Each member should pull his or her own fair share of the family workload.**
7. **Your home is a *home*, not a hotel.** No one has the right to come and go as they please. All rules should be based on mutual respect and love.