



Blending Families

Blending family members can seem like an overwhelming hurdle to cross. Many families have gone through it and found ways to understand and adjust to the new family life that may help you as well. If you or your partner have children from a previous relationship and are in the process of creating a new family then there is a lot to consider. Each member of the family is going to bring with them their own traditions, beliefs, routines and habits. The differences can be as obvious as what time supper is, to conflicting ideas about how to discipline children. It is easy to see how frustration and anger can arise as the new members get to know and live with each other.

Here are some suggestions for the adults:

1. Mutually establish new rules for the household. Each partner should have an opportunity to share his or her perspectives and experience. Next, agree on a new set of rules that can work for all members of the family.
2. Develop new traditions. Everyone has their own ideas about how to celebrate holidays, run a household, etc. so try to stay flexible and be willing to try new ideas. It is easy to come with the perspective of good and bad as far as traditions but if you are open to new ideas you may find yourself having a lot of fun.
3. Be open and honest with the other members of your family. Part of learning to get along in a new setting is understanding where the others are coming from. This may be very difficult at first but gradually everyone will benefit.
4. Start out in a fresh new environment. If this is not possible then perhaps ask for input from everyone on redecorating (such as having the children pick out paint for their bedrooms etc.) the existing home.
5. Take time to talk. Always good advise for any family. Try not to allow this time to become a complaint session but rather a time when everyone feels they have a voice and that the others are sincerely hearing them. We all appreciate the respect and time when given to us by our family members.

Blending families can be a challenging task but given time, the efforts made by all can prove to be very rewarding.