

# How to Help Your Child Navigate Your Remarriage

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If you've ever seen the movie [Yours, Mine, and Ours](#) you know that children play a major role in successfully blending your new step-family. While this movie was funny, entertaining, and eventually led to a happy ending, almost [60-70% of blended family marriages end in divorce](#) when the couple brings children with them into the relationship. Those numbers are astonishing! Now, this doesn't mean that your new marriage is doomed to fail if one or both of you bring children from previous relationships into your marriage, however, it does mean that you and your spouse should take time to consider how you can understand your children's feelings and help them adjust to the big changes taking place in their lives.

### Understanding Your Child

Remarriage from a child's perspective can mean a lot of different things. It may mean moving, changing schools, bouncing between homes, new rules, [less emotional availability from their biological parent](#), or the betrayal of their nonresidential or deceased parent. It's important to remember that while your children are not necessarily victims, they probably have had very little say about the big changes happening in their lives. Below are several key things to remember when helping your children adjust to your remarriage.

### Loss



Whether the child has recently experienced their parents divorce, or the death of a parent, it is normal for them to feel grief. Children may have had fantasies that their parents would reunite after divorce or feel threatened that the new step-parent will replace their deceased parent. You as parents (biological and step-parents), should allow your children the time they need to grieve the loss of their original family or deceased parent. Just like you would never tell a friend to 'get over' the loss of a loved one, you should never diminish the feelings of loss that your child is experiencing.

### New Roles, Rules, and Expectations

Once again, the movie [Yours, Ours and Mine](#) poses as a great example of how role, rules, and expectations can be stressful and confusing for children. In the movie, Admiral Frank Beardsley and Helen North fall in love and decide to get married...without telling their children first. As the two homes blend, Frank's military disciplined children clash with Helen's free-spirited children which results in a full blown rebellion. It's not until the end of the movie that they find a compromise which brings peace.

In a much less dramatized way, this merging of family culture happens when two people first marry. Through sometimes bumpy and rocky roads they find a new normal. Couples without children can usually dedicate their full attention to this stage in their marriage, however, this just isn't the case in remarriage when children are present which can be difficult for everyone involved. You can help your children adjust to your new normal by strengthening your own new relationship and by communicating with the ex-spouse about the roles, rules and boundaries you both want to maintain to create consistency in the lives of your children.

## Betrayal and Loyalty Binds



Children may also be experiencing a certain amount of betrayal which can cause conflict with the step-parent. Children may feel that if they accept the new step-parent they are betraying their nonresidential parent. These feelings may be further fueled when either the residential or non-residential parent talks negatively about the other parent or step-parent.

## Respecting Their Feelings

You can help your children adjust to the changes in their lives by being an attentive and active listener, reassuring them that the new marriage will not lessen your love for them, and by openly communicating with them (a.k.a. Don't drop bombshells on your children. Give them time to process the change before it happens). By giving them the opportunity to communicate their feelings and frustrations, you assure them that they truly are a part of your family and that they haven't been forgotten.

In all cases, try your best to be patient. You should never try to force them to feel a certain way about their new step-parent/step-siblings, or situation. Ask them to help define and set expectations for their step-family relationships. While they may not immediately 'click' with your new family, by being kind, respectful, and considerate you will give them the safe space they need to adjust positively.

## Working with Your Spouse

Successfully co-parenting in a step family can be hard, **but it is possible!** While children may not be ready for the step-parent to step in as a replacement parent, biological parents can still include the [step-parent in parenting](#). Making and discussing a [parenting plan](#) with your new spouse can alleviate role confusion stress and assure that the step-parent doesn't get alienated from the new family. By working as a team, less strain is placed on both parents which will create more opportunities for the new marriage to grow and develop.

## Additional Resources

- [Secrets to a Successful Second Marriage](#)
- [What Your Child is Experiencing When You Remarry](#)
- [Helping Children and Families Deal with Divorce and Separation](#)
- [How to Help Your Child Accept a Second Marriage](#)
- [9 Ways To Help Your Child Deal With Remarriage & Build A Happier Family](#)
- [Stepchildren Ruining Your Marriage? Here's How to Erase the Damage...](#)
- [Five Things to Know if You're Marrying Someone with Children](#)