

# Parenting in a Blended Family



## What is a blended family?

A blended family, also called a stepfamily, is a family unit in which one or both parents have children from a previous marriage or relationship.

Becoming part of a blended family can be exciting and fun, but also stressful and challenging. It will take time, energy and care for the family to adjust to the changes and function well as a unit.

## You Are Not Alone

Every day, there are about 2,100 blended families formed in the United States.

Eighteen percent of children under the age of 18 living in a two-parent household are part of a blended family.

Approximately 1/3 of all marriages in America form blended families.

30 million children under the age of 13 in the US are currently living with one biological parent and that parent's current partner.



## Blended family tips for parents

- Nurture your relationship with your partner
  - Acknowledge challenges and work towards solutions.
  - Take time to adjust.
  - Take time to grow your relationship.
  - Check-in with your partner to see how they're adjusting.
  - Learn effective co-parenting skills.
- Provide emotional support to your children
  - Create family routines and rituals to bond.
  - Encourage your children to discuss how they're feeling.
  - Don't make your child a messenger or put them in the middle.
  - Reassure your children they belong in the family, and are valued, and loved.
  - Laugh together and have fun. It builds positive family connections.
- Seek support and stay optimistic
  - Educate yourself about trials and triumphs of blended families.
  - Talk to other blended families to see what worked for them.
  - Educate grandparents on what's going on.

## Signs your child may be having a difficult time

- Poor self-care
- Poor concentration
- Neglecting homework
- Sleep problems
- Discontinuing activities with friends
- Anger/acting out
- Physical symptoms: fatigue, stomachaches, headaches
- Alcohol or drug use
- Eating disorders

## Helping your child adjust to the new family

Your child will have thoughts and feelings about the changes taking place. Here are some actions you can take to help them adjust.

- Give them age appropriate information.
- Validate their feelings and concerns.
- Provide them with opportunities to contribute to the family and establish a sense of belonging and worth.

Your child's pediatrician should be your primary source of advice about your child's health.



Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1 (757) 668-8246

주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다.  
1 (757) 668-8246