



Building Stepfamilies That Work[©]

Tips for Stepfathers

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1. It is vital to establish a relationship with your stepchild before you attempt to provide discipline. Heed the golden rule for building a relationship with your stepchild: Find out what they like to do, and do it with them. Sharing enjoyable, one-on-one time with them will go a long way to developing a good relationship. Activities that the only the two of you share are likely to turn into important ones for you both.
2. Ensure that you and your partner have established a set of house rules that you both can, and will support. Draw on the power of the relationship the biological parent has with the child by saying: "In this house we...."
3. If you believe your partner is being unreasonable with their child (i.e., your stepson/stepdaughter) try serving as a support to the child by "taking their side". Doing so may begin to build trust between you and that child.
4. If you find that you are usually greeted with a host of problems, beefs and issues the moment you walk in the door, you probably need to: a) begin having regular family meetings, and b) designate the entrance to your home as a "No Conflict Zone".
5. Participate in family meetings. Be open to suggestions from the children on chores and other tasks that need to be done. Keep in mind that family meetings are an excellent vehicle to show your leadership and commitment to the family.
6. If you begin to feel that you are being undermined or excluded, address your concerns privately with your partner.
7. Be an example. Show respect and courtesy. Hear others out before adding your view. Knock on doors before entering another's space. Apologize when you have hurt or offended another. Keep in mind that one of the most important things you are likely to teach your stepchild is that men who are confident in their role, and in themselves, are both gentle and firm.

Tips for Stepfathers.rtf 17 February 2008

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