

Can We Ever Be One Big Happy Family?

Tips for Strengthening Blended Families

Chances are you've felt this way about your family. Being a parent is a tough job. **Prevent Child Abuse Indiana** believes that we all want to use the best means possible to build stronger family relationships.

Blended families face special challenges. Each person in the family has to adjust to many new things. Parents have new partners and children and children have an additional parent and new siblings. This change is bound to put additional stress on everyone. By keeping communication open and being patient, blended families can work through these challenges. Here are some suggestions that will help make your family's adjustment a little easier:

- Do not ignore feelings. Let all family members express how they are feeling without being criticized. Keep the lines of communication open and you can avoid many conflicts.
- Emphasize the positive aspects of your new family. Everyone has skills, traditions and customs that they bring to the family.
- Work to create an environment that makes everyone feel welcome and loved in the new family.
- Encourage all family members to spend some one-on-one time with each other. This will help strengthen new and existing bonds.
- As a parent, make time with your new partner to communicate your concerns and set goals.
- Be open in asking for help if you need it.

Adapted from "Adjusting In A Blended Family" by Michael K. Tonjum, Ph.D. and "Blended Families" by HealthPLACE Parlay International.



www.pcaain.org

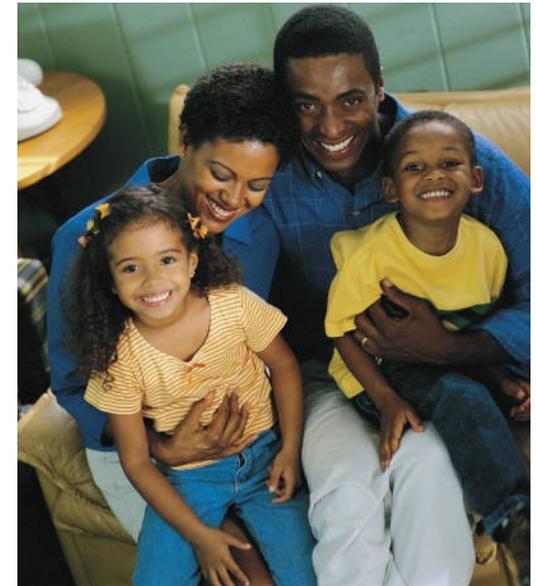


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Tips for All Families



What We Can Do Together?

Tips for Building Family Traditions

Chances are you've asked yourself this question. Being a parent is a tough job. **Prevent Child Abuse** Indiana believes that we all want to use the best means possible to raise and nurture children. With a few skills and tips, all of us can build stronger family relationships.

Family traditions can take many different forms. Traditions can be everything from annual holiday celebrations to playing a game together every Friday night. All traditions have one thing in common — they bring families closer together. Developing these family ties helps strengthen your family bonds now and for generations to come. Here are some ideas on how to start traditions in your family and form closer family relationships.

- Ask family members to tell what their “ideal” family tradition would be. If possible, involve extended family as well as your immediate family. Consider everyone's likes and dislikes and try to include something from each family member in the new tradition.
- Research your ethnic and religious heritage to find an activity that can be tied to your values and beliefs. This can provide for a strong and more lasting family tradition.
- Seek agreement and commitment by family members when deciding on a new tradition. Remember that family traditions are a way to spend time with your family doing something that everyone enjoys.
- Make a plan. Give each member of your family a specific task in the new tradition. This helps each member feel responsible for the success of your new tradition.

Family traditions will not always go as planned, but that will make them memorable. It is never too late to start a family tradition. The most important thing is that your family is spending time together strengthening your relationships.

Adapted from “Celebrating Traditions Can Strengthen Family Ties” by Ohio State University Extension and “Creating New Holiday Traditions” by Carleton Kendrick, Family Education Network.

TV, the Internet, Cell Phones & Video Games

What You Can Do to Help Your Child

In this age of fast and easy access to information, parents face a tough job of monitoring what their children see and watch. With parental guidance and open communication, television, the Internet and video games can be educational, boost self-esteem and increase problem solving skills. Here are some tips to help you and your children.

Television:

- Stay informed about what your children are watching on television.
- Keep televisions in places where the entire family can watch and discuss the shows.
- Set guidelines for your children about watching television.
- Plan ahead and schedule what you and your children will watch together.
- Make watching television a family project and talk about what you like and dislike about the programs you watch.



Internet:

- Keep the computer in high-traffic areas of your house, such as the family room.
- Find web sites you think your children will enjoy and “bookmark” them.
- Before allowing your children online, discuss safety issues with them.
- Set up guidelines about meeting people on the Internet. Talk to you children about what to do if their new Internet friend asks to see them in person, or wants your children to send pictures.
- Help your children understand why it's important not to reveal personal information on the web.
- Let your children know they can come to you if they are receiving email messages that make them feel uncomfortable. Tell them that in such an event, they should save the messages for you to read.
- Investigate software and web sites that can help you ensure safety for your children while on the Internet.



Cell Phones

A cell phone lets you stay in touch with your children at almost all times. In addition to being practical, having a cell phone can help you easily get in touch with your kids in case of an emergency.

Although the increased independence that a cell phone might offer a child can be good, it can also be a negative thing. Consider that with a cell phone, your child will simply have another way to communicate with the outside world that you will have little supervision over. And keep in mind that most of today's cell phones offer almost complete internet access, with web browsing, email, chat, and instant messaging, that is much harder to filter and control as compared to your home computer.

Cell phones may even be a distraction to kids. We all know that they are a distraction for drivers, but one study has also shown that cell phones can be a big distraction for kids crossing the street and could lead to more accidents and injuries.

Cell phones also put your child at risk for getting in trouble for:

- sexting - sending or receiving nude pictures or classmates
- prank calls - which can get your child in trouble if someone starts pranking other people from your child's phone

Whether or not your child is ready for or needs a cell phone is something a parent will have to decide for themselves. Do make sure that your child can handle the responsibility for a cell phone though, before you buy one. Also remember that you can buy a phone that is just a phone; it doesn't have to have internet access. Source: About.com “Kids and Cell Phones”

Video Games:

- Monitor the video games that your children play.
- Choose video games that contain minimal or no violence.
- Choose video games that have an

