

Holiday Hints for Step families

Step families don't just have family trees -- they have family forests. At this time of the year, it may be difficult for Step families to navigate their way through the trees!

It's not unusual for Step families to experience additional stress and confusion during the holiday season.

Here are some tips to help: Step families can develop their own traditions. Find something that is enjoyable for everyone; for example, cutting and decorating a Christmas tree together. A particular way of celebrating the holiday may gradually be developed as time passes. In the meantime, follow several traditions, and compromise when needed.

Children may be moving back and forth between households more frequently during the holidays. This can be stressful for kids, because they must adjust to different environments which often have different rules and expectations. Give kids "quiet time" if they need it. This gives them a chance to "regroup" and adjust. Don't be surprised if kids withdraw from interaction a bit at the holidays. This is their way of coping and adjusting to a new environment and new situations.

Plan some time for you and your new spouse during the holidays. If you wait for some "free time" to turn up, the holidays will be over!! Make a date, and keep it!

Let everyone help plan fun things to do for the holidays so you will get away from the daily tasks and have some new traditions of your own. This will help create pleasant memories of your own for the future.

Most importantly, remember that the purpose of the holidays is to celebrate and enjoy each other, not to divide the time between households evenly right down to the last minute.

These tips were provided by Linda Schaefer; MA Linda is a licensed professional counselor with Associated Counseling Professionals in Omaha.