



Dad Central

Facts for Fathers

# One Step At A Time

**Children need to adjust to their parents' new relationships. Here are some things you can do to help them.**

- Give them time. New relationships always take time.
- Ensure good relationships with original parents. Children need positive contact with their moms and dads.
- Let them know you understand that it's hard for them. Empathy is important.
- Protect them from conflict and other adult problems. This is not their responsibility.
- Support their new relationships.
- Give them as much stability as they can get.

## **Keys to relationships with stepchildren**

- Let them come to you, on their terms, and in their time.
- Create opportunities to spend quality time with them.
- Doing activities together can make it a little easier, like taking walks or bowling.
- Respect their need for time with their mother. This is important.
- Respect their relationship with their father. There is another man in their life.
- Enjoy and appreciate the good times. They are building blocks for your family.

# Connecting with Your Stepchildren

Your new relationships take hard work and lots of creativity. But the effort you give now pays off later. Here are some tips for connecting with your stepchildren:

## Under 5 years old

- Help look after the children, while respecting their relationship with their original parent.
- Play together and let them lead the play.
- Be kind, positive, and patient as they are adjusting to the new relationship they have with you.
- Support good routines throughout the day.

## School-aged children (6-11 years old)

- Do activities together.
- Don't expect children to see you as a parent figure right away.
- Give the children time to warm up to you.
- Respect the child's relationship with the original parent.

## Older children (12+ years old)

- Don't make too many demands on them too soon.
- Driving them places can be a good, low-pressure way to be together.
- Be a friend before you try to be a parent.
- Understand and forgive the anger and resentment they may feel towards you.
- Be patient – stay away from lectures and anger.



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**Want to know more?**

Dad Central Ontario has booklets and other resources for fathers.

Visit [dadcentral.ca](http://dadcentral.ca)