

## **Forming New Relationships When You Have Children**

If you're a single mom or dad left with your children after a former failed union with a partner, there are certain considerations for when it's time to start entering the dating world again. Although we want our children to be happy for us during our new ventures, it's important to protect them from feeling neglected and/or replaced by a new dating prospect.

As adults, we know that dating may lead to several short-lived relationships. It's important to keep our children from forming attachments with all of these potential partners before you know you will be dating this person for some time. Conversely, you also want to ensure this person is going to be compatible with your children before taking it too far.

Entering the dating world when you have children requires some creative thinking for both partners. This can also result in a more rewarding and tighter bond in the relationship, if it's determined to be part of your lives long term.

Your children are just as, if not more so, emotionally sensitive during the dating process than you. There are also special considerations if they have emotional issues remaining from a past breakup or end of a relationship they were a part of.

Always remember to take things very slow, and tread carefully with a new prospective partner meeting your children. You may be very excited to share your new relationship with your kids, but it's important to remember it's always best to wait for later rather than sooner.

Remember that your children will take emotional cues from you; if you begin to become emotionally attached, they will too. Once it becomes time to introduce your children to your new partner, allow for a few dates to slowly become accustomed to the arrangement.

Great ideas for these 'dates' would be to go bowling, skating, or even attending sporting events that allow the kids to have a great time, but still carry on conversations with you and your partner. Just remember to always allow for an environment that is not too distracting, such as a movie, but will still allow for all to have fun.

Remember, too, that choosing a neutral location to meet your new partner at will make the kids more comfortable than meeting at one of your homes at first. This way, the kids can't hide in their rooms or leave to play with the neighbors; this prevents the purpose of you analyzing their reaction to your new partner.

Keep in mind that children are much different than adults when meeting new people: first impressions are not very important, and they may not be as welcoming as you may have hoped. Don't pressure them too much when it comes to getting to know your date – it could possibly just cause them to pull away in the end and avoid it all together.

Always remember that any date you introduce your children to may be temporary, but your kids will be a permanent fixture in your life and thus more important. Always consider their feelings

and disposition when it comes to your chosen partners in order to ensure harmony in your new family unit.