

Co-Parenting During the Summer: Tips for a Successful Summer



With the arrival of summer, stepfamilies may be gearing up for visits from stepchildren. Often children living with one parent during the school year will spend time with their other parent for extended periods of time throughout the summer months. Extra complications may arise within the stepfamily due to changes in routines and schedules, but by incorporating a few strategies, summer transitions can run smoothly for all family members (Bonnell & Papernow, 2019).

1. Provide structure and routine for children

During the school year, children have routines and scheduled activities, so by making a summer schedule, including planned summer camps and events, children will have some consistency between both households. The schedule should also include pick-up and drop-off times and locations, so all parents are prepared. Scheduled pick-up and drop-off times also provide

clarity for children about where they will be and when (Papernow, 2013). Communicating the summer plan with the other parent helps to keep them in the loop and provides important information about their children. Finally, it is helpful to give the children a copy of the calendar, whether it's a hard copy or electronic copy. This will provide consistency and predictability for children as they transition between households.

2. Be consistent about rules and expectations at both houses

Parenting expectations and family rules are common areas of disagreements that can cause stress and tension among parents. Although children do not need both households to have the exact same set of rules, agreements on basics such as bedtimes, screen time, and curfews create consistency for children (Bonnell & Papernow, 2019). Keeping expectations similar at both houses not only instills good habits in children, but it also helps with the transition between households.

3. Create a living space for the children

Every child needs a space that they can call their own, especially if they are spending an extended amount of time in a different home. Creating a personal space for children, including a bed, closet, dresser, etc., helps them to deal with the transitions between households.

4. Create memories with your

children

Co-parenting during the summer months can be stressful, but it provides opportunities for children to strengthen their relationship and create memories with their non-residential parent. Spending quality time with both parents provides reassurance for children and helps to strengthen and reinforce family customs and traditions (Ahrons, 2004).

The summer months often provide opportunities for children to visit their non-residential parent, and the transitions between households can be complicated. By focusing on co-parenting strategies, the summer experiences can also serve as an opportunity to make life-long memories for all family members.

References

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By Shannon Cromwell, Extension Associate Professor