



Dating With Kids: How To Introduce Your New Partner To Them

Aug 7, 2021 [Maria Olsen](#) [Editor's Picks](#)

Dating in midlife can come with challenges. When and how to introduce a partner you are seeing to your children can be one of them.

My kids were young adults when I began seeing other people, [post-divorce](#). My streetwise daughter passed judgment on a couple of suitors, and those relationships did not work out. She could see things objectively that I could not at that point. **Wasn't I supposed to be the one giving dating advice to her?** It was a humbling experience.

Then, my daughter sensed that I was comfortable with my current partner, and that made a difference. Their introduction was not hurried and came in due time. **With adult children, opportunities can naturally present themselves for meetings, like birthdays, holidays, graduations and other life events.** The more relaxed everyone is, the better. Backyard barbeques, with other friends as buffers, can be an excellent start.

It can be a bit more difficult when it comes to introducing your significant other to younger children. There may be resistance and confusion. **When your kid is ready to meet another person who is dating his/her mother will differ depending on age, maturity, how long it's been since their parents split up, and how the child is handling the breakup.**

Many of my divorced or widowed friends will not introduce their children to anyone they are [dating](#) until the relationship becomes serious which, for most, takes at least six months. This makes sense. If the person is not expected to be around for a long time, why expose your child to another possible breakup?

Introducing your children to your significant other is a decision to be considered carefully – echoes Dr **Anita Gadhia-Smith** of [Practicaltherapy.net](#)-. Make sure that the relationship is stable and serious, otherwise, your children could form an attachment and have to go through the pain of separation if you break up. Introduce your partner gradually, and give your children time to get used to this new person in their lives. Always put your children's concerns first, so that they do not question your love and loyalty.

Wait until it feels right

When the time is right, plan something in a relaxed atmosphere. If your children are old enough, ask them about their preferences such as when and where to meet. **The meeting may be awkward for everyone, so try not to have expectations.** Remember that you are modelling relationships for your kids and that they may be possessive of you, so go easy on physical touch, at least initially. And don't be too disappointed if you get a chilly reaction to the news.

Sue Sudbay, an executive coach in Palm Springs, California, who remarried in her 50s, advises not to introduce your children to someone you are [dating](#) during the early stages of those relationships. *"Make sure it's someone you think will have an important role in your life going forward, at least for the foreseeable future,"* she explains. *"Don't introduce them after the first date or to boyfriend after boyfriend! Kids need stability in their lives so be sure this is someone who is likely to be around for a while."*

Respect your kids' feelings

Remember that it will likely take time for your children to accept anyone new into your family. **Respect their needs to adjust to their new situation and to grieve. They may hope that their parents will reconcile and become a couple again.** So proceed slowly, but be honest.

"You want the kids to know this is your new friend, someone who's important to you," Sudbay says. *"I told my kids that Dave's not going to be your new dad. You don't even need to like him, although I hope you will. All I ask is that you are happy for me that I have someone new in my life that makes me happy."*

This approach worked very well for this blended family that includes four adult children.

Take baby steps

Try to stay relaxed, because your children will pick up on your emotions and vibration. Let the kids have space. Don't force new "family" activities or push them. *"Sometimes the more you push, the harder things are,"* Sudbay notes. *"If you take it easy, they will feel less pressure to have some kind of relationship with this new person."*

Assure them that they will not be replaced, that their father will always be their father, and that there is enough love for all. Also, set boundaries between your kids and your new partner to keep things appropriate, and communicate with your ex, if need be, to keep things calm.

"Make sure you continue to have time with the kids without the new boyfriend there all the time, they still need that mom connection time. Yes, even the teenagers," Sudbay counsels.