

The Stepfamily Ice Cream Party

One way to think about your stepfamily is like an ice cream party. When you begin, there were two families. Just for fun, pretend that each family is a different flavor of ice cream. As people get to know each other, and as respect and understanding grow, the two family flavors come together in different ways. But every stepfamily makes its own special combination of flavors. Families add new experiences and customs (like toppings). They can keep old ways and add new ways to celebrate holidays, birthdays, and graduations. They can take vacations or trips together and find ways to be close (like a double or triple scoop). Everyone can help each other out and feel like they fit in. Here are just a few versions of how the two family “flavors” can come together:



- **The family swirl.** Both family histories and ways of doing things are important, and each family keeps some of its old ways, only now they do them together with stepsiblings and stepparent. They can become a family team that follows each other’s traditions and also combines some to make new ones.

- **The family smoothie.** Most things about each family eventually blend together like a smoothie. It doesn’t feel much like two flavors after a while, but rather a brand-new flavor they created out of the ingredients of the old ways. They create some brand-new traditions together and blend together the ways they used to do things. They can also become a family team that keeps growing together.



- **The family sundae.** Each family keeps most of its old ways of doing things as before, but now they are one half of a new family team. When they have a birthday celebration, they do it the way they did before they were a stepfamily, but everyone joins in. One year they celebrate Thanksgiving the way one part of the family used to do it, and the next year they switch. They support each other and are a family team, respecting each one’s independence and style.

**There are many ways to have a strong
and happy stepfamily!**

What will your stepfamily’s ice cream party look like?

