

CENTER ON FATHERING

Fathering is For Life

1675 Garden of the Gods
Colorado Springs, CO 80907
Phone: 719-634-7797
Email: DHSCenteronFathering@elpasoco.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/fatheringisforlife/>
<https://humanservices.elpasoco.com/center-on-fathering/>



Center on Fathering Monthly Newsletter---May 2022

Top Reasons for Divorced Dads to WAIT to Introduce a New Partner to Their Child-by Lori Denman-Underhill, *The Goodmen Project*, February 27, 2018



Introducing new partners to children following divorce or separation requires enormous sensitivity and awareness. As much as the happiness of the parent is important, the focus must be on the children and what's right for them.

Why should divorced dads wait to introduce a new partner to their child? The top reason is the needs of the parents should be secondary to the child's needs. As the family expands and blends into a different fabric of people, it's best to not jump

before your child is ready. The trick is to learn about the importance of waiting and how to do it properly.

How important is this subject? Very. Its importance is evident, as it's a top topic of conversation amongst the divorced and also therapists and mediators. This month in Los Angeles, a huge conference was called , "Recoupling From the Child's Perspective." Many professionals including therapists and mediators gathered to discuss the topic, "Five Rules for Introducing You're New Partner to Your Children." One interesting rule was for divorcing dads to keep in mind your child

may often see your new partner as a rival. He or she may not share those smitten feelings of love, so keep that in mind. Just keep thinking, “child at the center.”

An attendee of this seminar, professional mediator Judith Weigle, admits she has seen it all. The good, bad and the ugly of divorce and motives of separating parties, intentional and not. She helps men and women uncouple in peace, and keep their child at the center, not in the middle. This waiting period topic is one of her specialties, as many divorcing men visit her office for guidance.

“Make sure your child is ready to adjust to their parent being intimate with another adult,” Weigle suggested to these men with concern. “Remember your child must feel comfortable around someone other than their other parent being intimate with their parent, and that’s a lot of accepting and process. Your child must be ready for this. Being sensitive to your child’s comfort level around a new partner and making sure your child knows his or her feelings are important is key. They should also know from you that they can discuss their feelings about your new partner with you. This will let your child know that they are an important part of the family as it grows.”

There is a lot of common sense in making decisions on when to introduce new partners to children. One must make the children the priority in gauging when and when not to introduce a new partner. Keep in mind, working with a therapist may be a good idea if your child is still having problems processing the divorce.

Here are eight reasons to wait before your child meets your new boyfriend or girlfriend:

- 1) Your child is having a hard time processing the divorce
- 2) Your ex hasn’t met your new partner yet
- 3) Your child says they aren’t ready
- 4) Your new partner has just entered a drug treatment program
- 5) Your new partner is still married
- 6) Your relationship is under one year
- 7) You and your ex are still fighting. Children can handle a lot of change that divorce brings on, as long as their parents get along. That, for your children, is all they need to be the most emotionally healthy people possible.
- 8) The relationship isn’t monogamous yet

Denise Banks, certified divorce coach, and owner of Family Journey offered another similar perspective. Banks agrees with Weigle, that a parent needs to focus on the child and their well-being when considering dating a new partner.

“Kids need to be smothered in stable relationships... with family and friends,” Banks explained. “The transient nature of the dating scene is disruptive — especially when the relationships ends, as most eventually will.”

This explains another reason to wait and be in at least a year-long monogamous relationship, prior to the introduction. Some kids see the new partner as a rival in a battle for their father’s attention, love and affection.

MONTHLY ACTIVITIES (free)



UpaDowna Little Hikers: Scavenger Hunt: Fri, May 13, 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM, Stratton open space, 1504 Ridgeway Avenue Join UpaDowna Little Hikers at Stratton Open Space for a 1-mile hike where Little Hikers will complete a scavenger hunt for various things in nature such as birds, shapes in the clouds, and animal tracks. This is not stroller friendly event. Carriers are recommended for our littlest hikers. This is a SPUR event - Similar Paths United by Recreation. It is geared towards Little Hikers, which means it is for families with toddlers or preschoolers. Bring water, snacks, sturdy shoes, sunscreen/sun protection, and wear layers as it may be chilly! To register go to:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/upadowna-little-hikers-savenger-hunt-tickets-319787331517?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>



Creative Art Classes For Kids & Teens: Online, Saturday, May 7th, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM. This free painting class offered by Palak Dhorajiya, and is open for all ages. You are welcome to this class as a beginner as well. We will be doing a painting on nature and learn how to blend colors. I will be walking you through a few techniques to make blending easier. I have different versions of same painting, so it suits all ages. To register go to:

https://www.eventbrite.com/e/creative-art-classes-for-kids-teens-colorado-springs-tickets-266978639297?aff=ebdssbdestsearch&keep_tld=1



Feed Your Feathered Friends Workshop: May 2022 (7 remaining days to register) Get ready to build with your mini DIYer for this month's Bird Feeder Kit! Whether it lands hanging outside of your window, or packaged up for mom for Mother's Day, this Bird Feeder will make all the little birdies feel loved. Bring your mini-DIYer into Lowe's at one of the select time slots. Workshops hosted by one of our experts are held from 9:00am – 12:00pm. Wasn't able to sign up for one of the expert hosted workshops? Choose the 12:00pm – 8:00pm time slot to stop by to pick up a kit from Customer Service and enjoy building your kit at home. To register go to:

<https://www.lowes.com/events/register/feed-your-feathered-friends-workshop>

WHAT'S NEW?

Lunch and Gardening with Dad Event

On Saturday, April 16, the Center on Fathering hosted a “Lunch and Gardening with Dad” event. There was a free presentation by Irene Shonle, Extension Program Associate, Colorado Master Gardener. The kids planted bean and nasturtium seeds (pots and seeds provided by us) and were able to take them home. After the event the Center served pizza and drinks.



Bryan Hawkins and Athena



Jeff Koch and Tyler



Frankie Archuleta, Ellie, Julie and Vera

Center on Fathering BBQ

The Center on Fathering is hosting a BBQ on Saturday, May 21st from 11:00-2:00 at Bear Creek Park. Bring your kids and come and meet other dads and their family. We will have a cornhole game & karaoke machine. There is a playground and volleyball net on site. We will be BBQing hot dogs, hamburgers and serving side dishes. Call Gary Grambort at (719) 649-5825 or email : garygrambort@elpasoco.com to confirm.

DHS Father's Advisory Council Meeting

El Paso County DHS created a Father's Advisory Council to improve father engagement between fathers and caseworkers. The Council members are Center on Fathering Alumni who have committed to one year of service. The Department hosted a meeting on April 26th Those attending the meeting were DHS staff member volunteers and dads: Keith Hall, Marvin Martin, Jr., and Brett Riding. We discussed the barriers that fathers and caseworkers most typically encounter in child welfare and what we would like to see change.

Fathering For Life Classes at Mt Carmel Veterans Center



As part of the Center on Fathering's effort to provide services to the community, we are offering our 15-week Fathering Class at Mt Carmel Veterans Center from 5:30-7:00 pm. A new class began on April 14th and will graduate on July 20th.

Center on Fathering Staff Members to Receive Caring Dad's Training



Center on Fathering Staff members will receive free Caring Dads Facilitator training through a grant provided by an Applied Research in Child Welfare (ARCH) Project regarding engaging fathers in child welfare through the Colorado State University. Caring Dads is a 17-week group specifically for men who have abused or neglected their children or exposed them to abuse of their mothers.

Center on Fathering is Hosting a Father's Day Event by Providing Free Switchbacks Tickets!!



Enjoy the day before Father's Day with your family by watching the Switchbacks play the Indy Eleven on Saturday, June 18, 7:00 pm. The Center is offering four free tickets per family. You must redeem your tickets by June 3rd, or they will be given to another family. Call (719) 634-7797 to reserve your tickets.

Army recognizes Fort Carson and El Paso County DHS for Outstanding Community Partnerships



The Army selected seven installations and neighboring communities for demonstrating partnerships that improve quality of life, enhance Army readiness and modernize Army processes, while building stronger community relationships. Fort Carson and the El Paso County Department of Human Services (DHS) brought the Center on Fathering curriculum to Fort Carson Soldiers and families under the Army Community Service Family Advocacy Program. This partnership aims to prevent child abuse by encouraging father-child relationships, cultivating bonds, strengthening attachment, encouraging communication and building family resilience. The program received overwhelming positive feedback from participants showing the need for and importance of programs specifically designed for fathers. The award will be presented during a virtual ceremony on May 19th on Ft. Carson.

DAD'S TIPS

Here are the 5 Rules for Introducing Your New Partner to Your Kids-

Terry Gaspard, DivorceMag.com, December 27, 2021

- 1) **Timing is essential to healthy family adjustment after divorce.** Children need time to adjust to their parents' split and it can take a year or two for them to get over anger, sadness, and other emotions. If you introduce your children to someone who you are dating casually, this may complicate their adjustment to your divorce.
- 2) **Keep in mind that your kids may view your new love as a rival.** Just because you are smitten with your partner, it doesn't mean that your kids will share your positive feelings.
- 3) Consider your children's needs for security and reassurance. Introducing a new partner to your kids too soon can increase stress in the house and take energy away from your kid's ability to grieve the loss of their intact family. Be sure to give your kids lots of reassurance that you have plenty of love to go around.
- 4) **Ask yourself: Is my love interest a good fit for my family?** You might have great chemistry with someone, but they might not be best suited to become part of your family.
- 5) **Invite your children's feedback for ideas about how and when they meet your new partner for the first time.** If you've been dating someone for a while and feel relatively confident that you are heading toward commitment, talk to your children and explain that you are dating someone who you care about and that you'd like to introduce to them. Ask them if they have any questions. Keep the first meeting short and low key. Going to a restaurant or neutral spot for the first meeting is best. Ask your kids where they'd like to go and don't invite your partner's children to join you on the first few visits.



Be sure to be careful about sleepovers with your partner when you have children living with you. It's not wise to plan an overnight with your new love interest in your home right away because it can increase rivalry between them and your kids. If you co-parent, it should be easy to spend an overnight with them when your children are with your ex. Having your new partner spend the night should only be an option once you are sure that your relationship is permanent, or you are engaged.

Let your children know that you have an abundance of love to go around. It's crucial that you assure your kids that your partner will not replace their other parent or change your relationship with them. Don't be surprised if your children reject your new partner at first. Some kids express anger or defiance and may even threaten to move out – or go to live with their other parent full-

time. Adopt realistic expectations about your children's acceptance of your new partner. Just because you are enthralled with this person, it doesn't mean that your kids will share your enthusiasm.