3.12 Reconstituted Families: Step-Parenting and Blended Family Life: Test Pack

AQA 8192 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For two extended questions (the 8-mark and 12-mark) write in full sentences. Use sociological terms and, where asked, refer to the short Item provided.

1 Which one of the following best describes a reconstituted family in the context of family sociology in the UK?

- ☐ A) A household where three or more generations live together
- ☐ B) A family formed when two adults with children from previous relationships marry or cohabit
- ☐ C) A single-parent family with no contact with former partners
- ☐ D) A family where children are adopted by distant relatives

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Explain how the concept of 'family loyalty' can create tension in reconstituted families, giving a short example.

(Total for Question 2 is 6 marks)

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3 Identify and explain one difficulty step-parents often face when building a relationship with their step-child in reconstituted families.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Describe one practical challenge a household faces when a new partner moves into a reconstituted family home in the UK.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 State one ethical issue a sociologist should consider when interviewing children about their experiences in a reconstituted family.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.12 Reconstituted Families: Step-Parenting and Blended Family Life: Test Pack

Question 1

B (a family formed when two adults with children from previous relationships marry or cohabit)	**B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies that family loyalty refers to a child feeling allegiance to their biological parent	**B1**
explains that accepting a new partner can be seen as disloyal by the child	**B1**
explains this can cause the child to reject rules or attempts at closeness from the step-parent	**B1**
links the tension to conflicts between adults, e.g. biological parent may defend the child against the step-parent, undermining authority	**B1**
gives a short example, e.g. a teenager refusing to call the new partner 'dad' or 'stepdad' and the biological parent taking the teenager's side	**B1**
provides development, e.g. over time negotiation and clear boundaries can reduce the tension, but it may persist into adolescence	**B1**

Answer: Family loyalty means a child feels allegiance to their biological parent, and accepting a new partner can be seen as disloyal by the child, causing them to reject rules or closeness from the step-parent. This can lead to conflicts between adults if the biological parent defends the child, undermining the step-parent's authority. For example, a teenager may refuse to call the new partner 'dad' and the biological parent may side with the teenager, creating ongoing tension that may reduce only after negotiation and clear boundaries.

Question 3

identifies a difficulty, e.g. loyalty conflicts between the child and their non-resident biological parent	**B1**
develops the point, e.g. the child may feel disloyal if they accept the step-parent, making trust and closeness take longer to build	**B1**

Answer: One difficulty is loyalty conflicts between the child and their non-resident biological parent; the child may feel disloyal accepting the step-parent, so trust and closeness can take longer to develop.

Question 4

identifies a practical challenge, e.g. reorganising finances and household budgets	**B1**
development, e.g. combining incomes, paying child maintenance and deciding who pays for new expenses can be difficult	**B1**
further development or example, e.g. disputes may arise over how money is shared between biological children and step-children	**B1**

Answer: A practical challenge is reorganising finances and household budgets when combining incomes, managing child maintenance and deciding who pays for new expenses, which can cause disputes over how money is shared between biological children and step-children.

Question 5

identifies an ethical issue, e.g. need for parental consent and child's assent	**B1**
brief development, e.g. ensuring the child agrees and is not pressured and that sensitive topics are handled carefully	**B1**

Answer: An ethical issue is the need for parental consent and the child's own assent, ensuring the child agrees and is not pressured and that sensitive topics are handled carefully.

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