



Sibling Conflicts

Sibling struggles are a normal part of childhood.

Pointers for parents

* When to Get Involved...

When fighting is annoying to you, it's fine to tell the children to fight quietly or in a place away from you. Sibling arguments can get out of hand! When fighting becomes too destructive or physical, you must step in to remind them of rules about no hurting, no name calling and no property damage.

* What to do...

Have each child take one or two minutes to describe the problem. Encourage your children to listen to each other. Reframe it for them if you need to: "You're mad because you think Sam should share with you."

* **Protect each child's personal possessions, privacy and friendships.**

Remember that sharing is something we choose to do and a child should be allowed to decide about sharing,

but encourage or create times for sharing.

* Praise cooperative behavior.

Compliment them for helping each other and settling arguments well.

Show your children how to disagree and talk about strong feelings. "You feel very angry. Tell your brother why you feel so angry." Praise both children as they begin to talk about the problem. Cool down time may be needed to stop the fighting and start the talking.

* A chance to learn positive ways to handle disagreements.

Resist offering your ideas about solving the problem. Children can settle differences about who started the argument, who is right, and usually can find their own solutions.

* Solutions...

Settle arguments about a toy by proposing a way to share. For example, Johnny plays with the truck on the way to the store, Sam plays with it on the way home. If they cannot or will not agree, then neither will get the toy.

For Further Information Contact:



The Center for Parent Involvement (FCPI) was funded by the U.S. Department of Education; Goals 2000, Educate America Act from 1994-1999. Guided by an advisory board of parents and professionals, the FCPI's goal was to tap the power of parents.

The FCPI gathered information on parent needs, coordinated the information, and created a series of resources organized by theme, including fact sheets for parents and professionals, "Beyond the Basics" resources, and resource identification lists. Many of the resources have been translated into Spanish language versions, and every effort has been made to preserve the meaning and flavor of the original English documents. This series of materials provides a wealth of current information for both parents and providers; the complete set of resources can be obtained in PDF format on the Department of Child and Family Studies Website at www.fmhi.usf.edu/cfs/dares/fcpi. The staff of the FCPI are hopeful that their work will continue to help children get ready to learn for many years to come.

The series' themes include:

- Family Empowerment
- Parent Involvement
- Parenting Support
- School Readiness
- Violence in the Lives of Children
- Transition to Kindergarten

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Parent Support Series, Parent Tip Sheets, #15: Sibling Conflicts.

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