

12 Sibling Rivalry

Do you have more than one child? If so, then you have probably experienced sibling rivalry. It is wonderful to have brothers and sisters, however conflict is often part of all close relationships. For children, learning how to get along is a life lesson and practice happens first in the family. This requires significant parent patience but it requires you to be more of a coach than a referee. Research indicates that there are common reasons siblings fight, quarrel and tease. Sometimes they are just bored or tired. Other times they are seeking attention, looking for companionship or trying to develop their own sense of power. If nobody seems to be in danger of getting hurt, then advice to parents is to ignore mild quarrels. Maintain your usual activities and even leave the room. Children can learn to work out their own problems. In times when they are not arguing, remember to reward good behavior and spend time with each child. Studies even show that spending 15-20 minutes of one on one attention with each child per day can significantly reduce whining and aggression. You can play a game, read a book or involve them in a household activity.

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