

Sibling Rivalry

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November, 1998
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Program Description

This lesson focuses on building strong sibling relationships.

Constant fighting, put downs, and arguing among children cause frustration and concern in most parents. Although sibling rivalry can have several reasons, brothers and sisters often fight to get the attention of parents or to show power or superiority over another child.

Some bickering is normal among brothers and sisters. Constant arguing, fighting, and creating potentially dangerous situations, however, are not normal. This lesson shares some ideas to help reduce your frustration over quarrelsome siblings and lessen the fighting also.

Program Objectives

1. Parents will understand reasons for sibling rivalry.
2. Parents will learn about ways to reduce fighting among siblings.

Intended Audience

Parents and grandparents who are in a parenting role.

Materials Needed

Handouts - *Books for Children about Siblings*
Lets Get Along
Helping Children Solve Their Problems

Exercise - *How Would You Feel* for wives
How Would You Feel for husbands

Family Activity - Puppet Making - Provide supplies for this activity if you plan to do it at the program or just distribute the handout for a family event at home

Overhead projector

Overhead transparencies

Topics and Time Frame

Introduction and Get Acquainted	10 minutes
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Reasons for Sibling Rivalry - discussion	10 minutes
Ways to Reduce Fights - discussion	10 minutes
Activity of choice -	.
Exercise How would you feel	15 minutes
Overhead transparencies on Family meetings	15 minutes
Role Play Family Meeting	15 minutes
Distribute handouts	.
Summary	.

Get Acquainted Activity Suggestions

- Read excerpt from one of the books on handout 1 *Books for Children About Siblings*
- Do the *Ups and Downs* activity listed at the end of this lesson
- Sharing of Recollections of their sibling rivalry. Ask participants if they had siblings and if they quarreled a great deal during their childhood. Ask why they thought they quarreled. See if they could share stories of their earlier memories of what angered them or made them jealous of their siblings. Maybe some could remember what it was like when their parents brought a younger brother or sister home from the hospital. Discuss how their parents handled their sibling battles. Maybe discuss how they get along now.

Introduction

Siblings have the opportunity to develop unique and significant relationships. Helping children learn how to make the most of their relationships with their siblings not only helps you get through the day, it's also an investment in your family's future.

Ironically, the word most frequently associated with sibling is rivalry. Conflict is a natural part of all close relationships. But the conflicts between siblings can be handled in such a way that children learn valuable lessons in communication, listening, love, forgiveness, and resolving differences.

Learning to get along with others is one of the most important lessons that each of us learns. For most children their first opportunity for learning how to get along is with brothers and sisters. Family life offers a wonderful training ground for developing values of cooperation, honesty, kindness, and tolerance of others. Living with brothers and sisters can give a child a lot of practice in learning how to share and resolve conflicts.

Parents are their children's most important teachers. It takes a lot of careful thought and patience to teach young children how to get along. If you do your job well in the early years, you will be able to stay more on the sidelines as your children grow and mature.

The idea is to spend more time coaching kids than being a referee! Children need to know how to

- say please and thank you,
- share,
- ask for help,
- talk things over with others,
- control their anger, and
- calm themselves.

Conflict within Families:

The family is perhaps the most important group in which any one of us will function. It is important to realize that conflict will arise in all normal families.

In most families there are three general types of conflicts:

- between children
- between parent and child
- between spouses

Conflict between children will be discussed in this lesson.

Research has discovered that there are some common reasons why children fight, quarrel, and tease. Sometimes they are just bored, tired, or hungry. Other times they are seeking attention, looking for companionship, or trying to develop their own sense of power. Understanding why kids quarrel can help you know what to do.

Activity - Silent brainstorm reasons why parents feel that their children quarrel. Each parent has post its, they write their ideas on the post it and place them on a flip chart or there could be group brainstorm and the facilitator could use a marker to write them on a flip chart as the group thought of ideas

Mini-lecture

Reasons for Rivalry

1. One of the first reasons children quarrel, is that their basic needs may not be met. Kids who are tired, hungry, or bored are not going to feel cheerful and cooperative. A few minutes of rest, a healthy snack, and some interesting things to do can work wonders. You can help by making sure these basic needs are met first.

2. Sometimes kids fight just to get attention. If they are not getting the attention they need doing positive things they learn quickly that they will get the attention they want by

acting out. You need to be prepared to reward your children for the good behavior. You may want to:

Ignore mild quarrels - If it seems that no one is in danger of getting hurt, then you can ignore the quarrel. Maintain your usual activities, remaining calm and avoiding your children. If the noise bothers you, you may choose to leave the room so you will not be tempted to solve the problem. This works best if you remember to reward the good behavior.

Spend time with each child. Studies shows that 15 to 20 minutes of one-to-one attention with a child per day will significantly reduce whining and aggressive behavior. You can play a game, read a book, or simply involve them in your usual household activities.

Treat each child uniquely not equally. Try to avoid making comparisons. Instead of giving equal amounts (you have the same amount of grapes as your brother), give attention according to each individual need (Do you want a large or small bunch of grapes?). Instead of showing equal love (I love you just as much as your sister), show the child he or she is loved uniquely (You are the one and only "you" in my life and no one can ever take your place). Instead of giving equal time (I spent 10 minutes with your sister so now I can spend 10 minutes with you), give time according to their need (When I'm finished helping your brother with his project I'd love to hear all about your day.).

Attention from an older sibling may cause a younger sibling to seem like they are "bugging." Make sure you build family time for siblings to learn to enjoy each other. Time away from neighborhood friends where they must pick each other as close-in-age mates.

3. Some children need companionship but do not know how to get it from their sibling. Starting a quarrel with that sibling is a sure way to get them involved. Some children have an easier time than others in getting their brothers or sisters involved in their playtime.

You can teach your children how to negotiate or compromise. Learning to trade one toy for another and learning to take turns are a child's first lesson in the art of negotiation. You can help by showing your toddler how to trade a toy rather than just grabbing it from someone else.

You may need to teach your child words they can use to play with others. For some children it is as basic as saying "Would you play with me?" For others it means reminding them to say "please" and "thank you."

4. Power is another reason many children fight. Part of growing up is learning about personal power. Children naturally experiment to see whether they can get each other to do things. Competition between siblings can sometimes make children feel very insecure and intolerant.

As a parent you can avoid taking sides. For younger children, calmly but firmly separate the two children and lead them to separate rooms. Avoid yelling or lecturing. Talk with them only after they have had a few minutes to cool down. For older children, sit them near each other and ask them to tell you what they did wrong. This technique helps children accept responsibility for their actions and prevents them from blaming others.

Another good technique to use is to encourage win-win negotiations through these problem-solving steps:

Step 1. *Stop the action.* You may have to physically get between the two siblings.

Step 2. *Listen to each other's story.* Ask Jane to tell her side of the story and let Jill know that she will tell her side as soon as Jane is finished. Make sure no one breaks in while the other has the floor. (Jane always comes into Jill's bedroom and listens to her CDs).

Step 3. *Identify the problem.* Ask the two siblings if they can identify what the problem is. Don't identify the problem for them, but make sure they identify the real problem. (Jane doesn't get permission before coming into Jill's room and listening to CDs.)

Step 4. *List ways to solve the problem.* Then ask "How do you think you two could solve this problem?" (Jane has to ask Jill if she can come in her room every time before entering. Maybe Jane has some CDs that Jill would like to listen to. Maybe they can trade CDs and listen to them in their own room.)

Step 5. *Choose a solution that meets everyone's needs.* Make sure they come up with a solution that both can agree on. Sometimes one may want to give in rather than make sure the solution meets their needs. Help them through the process. (If Jill feels like she has to always allow Jane in her room, she still may not be happy. Maybe Jane also has something that she can share with Jill.)

Step 6. *Carry out the plan.* (Make sure you help to reinforce the plan.)

Step 7. *Evaluate how well the plan worked.* "How well did it work?" (After a week of trying out this plan ask the two girls how it seems to be working. Do we need to try something different?)

This technique will definitely need some adult help in working through these steps. Children who learn to use this technique will more likely learn to solve a conflict in a positive way.

HERE ARE A FEW WAYS TO REDUCE FIGHTS BETWEEN BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

1. Let siblings express their feelings - Acknowledge the angry or frustrated feelings. Let your child know that you understand this anger because it can help your child feel better and possibly treat the sibling better, too. First, identify the angry child's feelings with words then suggest a symbolic or creative activity to acknowledge it. When your daughter gets angry at her younger brother, you might say, "You sound furious! You wish he'd play with his own toys." Then suggest that she write about her feelings in her journal. A younger child might like to draw a picture of mad or angry feelings. You may be surprised at how quickly the anger disappears and problems seem to be resolved.

2. Don't compare siblings with each other. Comparing siblings does not encourage better behavior; it intensifies jealousy and envy. Parents sometimes believe the best way to avoid arguments among their children is to give equally to each child. No matter how hard parents try to make things equal, children are bound to find something that's unfair. Children feel special and valued when you give to each according to individual need.

3. Don't take sides in sibling fights. Resist the urge to figure out who started a fight. Parents often believe that the older or stronger child started the fight and should be punished. The fact is that it's nearly impossible to tell who may be at fault. Instead of taking sides, comment on the behavior you can observe. ("I see two kids fighting" instead of, "Jake, leave her alone.")

4. Let children work out differences. Despite your attempts at peace-making, your children may still argue or bicker. The more you stay out of minor fights, the sooner they will learn to settle their differences themselves.

It may help to remember the three B's when parents deal with sibling arguments:

- **Bear it.** Ignore the fighting as long as you can. Turn on music and pretend you're not even aware of the bickering.
- **Beat it.** When you can't ignore it any longer, go to another room where you can't hear their arguments as well.
- **Boot'em out!** Ask the children to take their fighting somewhere else. ("If you two kids need to fight, please do it outside where I don't have to hear it.")

Remember that these ideas are only appropriate when there are minor fights and no one is in danger of harming the other.

5. Sometimes you may have to step in to help children work out their differences. Getting involved is always appropriate when the same fights happen over and over and when fighting is serious and may be dangerous.

When sibling rivalry turns into real fighting, parents must step in. A parent's job is to protect children from physical or emotional injuries. You may use these steps:

- a. Describe what you see. You may say, "I see two sisters who are getting ready to hurt each other."
- b. Separate the children. "This looks dangerous. Sally, you go to the front yard and Janey, you go to the back."
- c. Set a cooling down period. "It looks like you're both upset. We'll talk about it later."
- d. Listen to each child's point of view and acknowledge feelings. "John, you think it's Amber's turn to do the dishes an Amber, you say you did them last night."
- e. Work out a possible solution together for dealing with the problem in the future. An example is when children begin a play fight that turns into a serious fight. Let children know that it's only a play fight when both children agree that it's in fun. The minute one child is not having fun, the fighting has to stop.

Summary

Conflict is a part of everyone's life. It takes time and persistence for you to learn new ways of treating your children, and for them to learn new ways of getting along.

Make sure you learn to let your children express their feelings, avoid comparing them, and treat each child as an individual. Remember that when you help your children get along better, you are preparing them for important relationships in the future with co-workers, spouses, and even their own children.

Evaluation

Use generic evaluation tools included in Evaluation section of this notebook.

References

Getting Along: Sibling Fights by Lesia Oesterreich, Iowa State University

Reducing Fights between Brothers and Sisters by Virginia Molgaard, Iowa State University

Getting Along: Brothers and Sisters by Lesia Oesterreich, Iowa State University

Siblings Without Rivalry, Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1987

Supplemental Activities

Activity 1 - Exercise How Would You Feel If... Use Handout for individuals to read script and write their reaction, then discuss. This may be an activity that you may choose not to use due to negative, hurt or jealous feelings that individuals may have with this activity. You must use your own discretion with this activity.

Activity 2 - Solving Problems Through Family Meetings - Make overhead transparencies and use with this discussion.

A family meeting is a forum in which all family members participate and in which family decisions and choices are made by working together. Parents, children, and any others who live in the home and have a stake in decisions affecting the daily life of the family should participate. A time should be selected that is agreeable to everyone. They can review the week and plan for the next.

There are two leadership roles at the family meetings: (1) a chairperson who keeps the discussion on track and sees that everyone's opinion is heard and (2) a secretary who takes notes at the meeting, writes them up and reads the minutes at the next meeting. These duties can be assumed by the parents at the first meeting. Later, other family members should take turns so that no one has total responsibility for these tasks.

The purpose of the family meeting is to recognize that everyone's opinions make a difference. Family meetings help to build cooperation and responsibility, and it makes anger and rebellion less likely. Also, it is a time to share love, develop unity, and to build trust and self-esteem. The social skills and attitudes which children develop within the family circle are the skills and attitudes which they will carry with them into the adult world.

Activity 3 - Role Play a family meeting

- Brainstorm about family issues that can be discussed in a family meeting.
- Discuss the ground rules and family meeting guidelines.
- Divide into family groups for role play. Have each participant be a family member in their group. Pass out family fun cards. Allow time for a family meeting.
- Discuss how participants felt as they played a family member in the role play.

Get Acquainted/Warm Up Activity

Ups and Downs

Time: 10 - 12 minutes (longer if more *characteristics are added)

* Characteristics which may be more personal can be added. If you plan a hard-core diversity training, these may include: Gay or Lesbian, mixed-race, married outside race.....

An activity to demonstrate that people have much more in common with others than they may think. It is through commonalities we build relationships. It is through relationships we value people as people not a label.

Say: "As this activity calls for you to stand up and sit down, please move your chair out. If standing is difficult, then you may remain seated and raise your hand. I'm going to name a characteristic of a person. If this characteristic describes you, then stand or raise your hand."

Stand if you....

-Born in NC	-Come from a small family	-Have 2 or more children who get along 50% of the time
-Born above the Mason Dixon Line	-Have 2 siblings	-Have children who almost never get along
-Like okra	-Have 3 siblings	-Are a single parent
-Are an only child	-Come from a large family	-Grew up with too little
-Are a mother	-Have 4 siblings	-Grew up with too much
-Are a father	-Have 5 siblings	-Consider yourself a good cook
-Are too short	-Have more than 5 siblings	-Like to read
-Are too tall	-Have 2 children	-Like to exercise
-Like dogs	-Have 3 children	-Are outspoken
-Consider yourself black	-Have 4 children	-Are quiet
-Consider yourself hispanic	-Have more than 4 children	-Like to dance
-Consider yourself white	-Have step children	-Have lost a spouse
-Consider yourself something else	-Have 2 or more children who bicker with one another	-Have a hidden talent
-Have older siblings	-Have 2 or more children who get along 100% of the time	-Like to garden
-Have younger siblings	-Have 2 or more children who get along 75% of the time	-Have a disability

Well, now you know a lot more about each other. You also know there are many others here with whom you share common experiences and characteristics. In fact we have more in common with each other than we have differences.

- As people, our shared humanity offers the best starting place for finding a common identity that transcends our differences.
- As human beings, we have the same fundamental psychological, social, and emotional needs.
- As people, our destinies, survival and prosperity are interdependent. We will either flourish or perish together.

EXERCISE TO USE WITH PARENTS

How Would You Feel FOR WIVES

Imagine that your spouse puts an arm around you and says, "Honey, I love you so much, and you're so wonderful that I've decided to have another wife just like you."

Your reaction:

When the new wife finally arrives, you see that she's very young and kind of cute. When the three of you are out together, people say hello to you politely, but exclaim ecstatically over the newcomer. "Isn't she adorable! Hello sweetheart... You are precious!" Then they turn to you and ask, "How do you like the new wife?"

Your reaction:

The new wife needs clothing. Your husband goes into your closet, takes some of your sweaters and pants and gives them to her. When you protest, he points out that since you've put on a little weight, your clothes are too tight on you and they'll fit her perfectly.

Your reaction:

The new wife is maturing rapidly. Every day she seems smarter and more competent. One afternoon as you're struggling to figure out the directions on the new computer your husband bought you, she bursts into the room and says, "Ooh, can I see it? I know how."

Your reaction:

When you tell her she can't use it, she runs crying to your husband. Moments later she returns with him. Her face is tear-stained and he has his arm around her. He says to you, "What would be the harm in letting her have a turn? Why can't you share?"

Your reaction:

One day you find your husband and the new wife lying on the bed together. He's tickling her and she's giggling. Suddenly the phone rings and he answers it. Afterwards he tells you that something important has come up and he must leave immediately. He asks you to stay home with the new wife, and make sure she's all right.

Your reaction:

EXERCISE TO USE WITH PARENTS

How Would You Feel FOR HUSBANDS

Imagine that your spouse puts an arm around you and says, "Honey, I love you so much, and you're so wonderful that I've decided to have another HUSBAND just like you."

Your reaction:

When the new husband finally arrives, you see that he's very young and good-looking. When the three of you are out together, people say hello to you politely, but exclaim ecstatically over the newcomer. "Isn't he adorable! Hello sweetheart... You are great-looking!" Then they turn to you and ask, "How do you like the new husband?"

Your reaction:

The new husband needs clothing. Your wife goes into your closet, takes some of your sweaters and pants and gives them to him. When you protest, she points out that since you've put on a little weight, your clothes are too tight on you and they'll fit him perfectly.

Your reaction:

The new husband is maturing rapidly. Every day he seems smarter and more competent. One afternoon as you're struggling to figure out the directions on the new computer your wife bought you, he bursts into the room and says, "Ooh, can I see it? I know how."

Your reaction:

When you tell him he can't use it, he runs complaining to your wife. Moments later he returns with her. His face is strained and she has her arm around him. She says to you, "What would be the harm in letting him have a turn? Why can't you share?"

Your reaction:

One day you find your wife and the new husband lying on the bed together. She's tickling him and he's laughing. Suddenly the phone rings and she answers it. Afterwards she tells you that something important has come up and she must leave immediately. She asks you to stay home with the new husband, and make sure he's all right.

Your reaction:

[Handout for Family Meetings]

Sample Agenda for Family Meetings

1. Discuss family issues, concerns, interests, and positive events of past week.
2. Determine priority issue(s).
3. Clarify the issue to be discussed.
4. Generate possible solutions.
5. Determine the most effective solutions.
6. Make plans to implement the solution.
7. Plan one fun activity for the coming week.

(Transparencies for Family Meetings - Enlarge and then copy on transparency film)

[Transparency 1]

GUIDELINES for FAMILY MEETINGS

- **Set time when all family members can be present**
- **Understand the purpose of regular family meetings**
 - **Establish a non-threatening atmosphere**
 - **Establish basic ground rules**
 - **Promote self-esteem of each family member**

[Transparency 2]

FAMILY MEETING GROUND RULES

- **Everyone gets a chance to talk**
- **One person talks at a time and does not get interrupted**
- **Okay to say what you feel**
 - **No one has to talk**
 - **Everyone has to listen**
- **No one puts anyone else down**

[Transparency 3]

FAMILY MEETINGS

- **Explain purpose of meeting**
 - **Provide ground rules**
 - **Discuss family fun**
- **Give time for others to think of activities**
 - **Discuss**
 - **Choose an activity**
 - **Make a plan**
 - **Review the meeting**

[Transparency 4]

SAMPLE AGENDA for FAMILY MEETINGS

- **Discuss family issues, concerns, interests, and positive events of the past week**
 - **Determine priority issue(s)**
 - **Clarify the issue to be discussed**
 - **Generate possible solutions**
- **Determine the most effective solutions**
- **Make plans to implement the solution**
- **Plan one fun activity for the coming week**

(Handouts - Cut and paste into your word processor, format if necessary, and print)

[Handout 1]

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN ABOUT SIBLINGS

One of the best teaching tools for families are children's books.

A Baby for Max by Maxwell Knight

A Baby Sister for Frances by Russell Hoban

Baby Sister Says No by Mercer Mayer

Big Brother by Charlotte Zolotow

Big Sister, Little Sister by Charlotte Zolotow

Do You Know What I'll Do? by Charlotte Zolotow

Go and Hush the Baby by Betsy Byars

I love My Baby Sister (Most of the Time) by Elaine Edelman

Just Me and My Little Brother by Mercer Mayer

Just Me and My Little Sister by Mercer Mayer

Me Too! by Mercer Mayer

Nobody Asked If I Wanted A Baby Sister by Martha Alexander

On Mother's Lap by Ann Herbert Scott

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

That New Baby by Sara Bonnett Stein

The New Baby by Fred Rogers

Let Me Tell You About My Baby by Roslyn Banish

Walk Home Tired, Bill Jenkins by Ianthe Thomas

[Handout 2]

Let's Get Along

Learning to get along with others is one of the most important lessons that each of us learns. One of our first opportunities to learn this important lesson is with our brothers and sisters. Living with brothers and sisters can give a child a lot of practice in learning how to share and resolve conflicts.

Family life offers a wonderful training ground for developing values of cooperation, honesty, kindness, and tolerance of others.

Parents are their children's most important teachers. Parents need to first understand why siblings argue, fight and bicker before they can help reduce some of this fighting.

Why do siblings fight?

Research has discovered that there are some common reasons why children fight, quarrel and tease one another. Some of these reasons include:

- 1. Basic needs are not met.** When kids are tired, hungry or bored they may not feel cheerful and cooperative.
- 2. Need for attention.** If children are not getting attention by doing positive things they learn quickly that they will get the attention they want by acting out.
- 3. Need companionship.** Some children need companionship but do not know how to get it from their sibling. When they start a quarrel with that sibling, they easily get their attention.
- 4. Power.** Part of growing up is learning about personal power. Competition between siblings can sometimes make children feel very insecure and intolerant.

What can you do to help reduce sibling rivalry?

~ **Avoid comparing one child with another.** Competition can increase rivalry. Try treating each child uniquely.

~ **Let your children decide whether they want to share.** Children don't always want to "share" everything. They like to feel ownership.

~ **Try to spend individual time with each child.** Give each child time according to need.

~ **Praise your children for who they are as well as what they do.**

~ **Help your children accept their frustrations.** Help them solve their problems.

~ **Praise your children for any improved behavior.** Coping with their frustrations is a lifelong process.

~ **Remember that your language affects how your children communicate.** Use appropriate language and a caring attitude when you talk.

Reference: Sibling Rivalry by Wendy Horikoshi, University of California

[Handout 3]

HELPING CHILDREN SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS

1. Gather Data

Collect information about events and feelings. If you plan to help the children negotiate, avoid blaming anyone (even if you think someone is at fault). Some possible questions:

What happened? How did you feel? How did your brother/sister feel? What did your brother/sister do? How did that make you feel? What happened then?

2. State the problem clearly

It is easier for children to solve a problem if they have a clear understanding of it. State the problem in terms of both children's needs. You can use one of these approaches or develop your own.

You want to _____ and your brother wants to. What can you do so you both can be happy?

OR

I know you are both upset about what happened. Let that pass. I want to talk about some things we might do to make you both happy now.

Remember: to include all children's needs in the problem statement.

3. Generate many ideas

- Go for quantity. Write all ideas down. Encourage children to suggest silly ideas as well as practical ones.
- Write down all the ideas. Evaluate them later. Evaluation stops the creative process.
- Encourage different ideas. If a child offers a similar idea, ask for something different. For example, Hitting, punching, and biting are all hurting ideas. What is something different?
- Avoid criticizing ideas. If a child offers an idea you do not like, help him or her evaluate it in the next step.

- Review problem frequently. It is easy for kids to wander from the problem. For example, Yes, that is a problem too. Right now we are looking for ways to _____. When we are done, we can consider that.
- Focus on the children's ideas. Resist the temptation to add your ideas, unless you are asked. If you offer ideas, they will become dependent upon your skill rather than develop their own.

4. Evaluate the ideas

- Consider all ideas. The purpose is to help children distinguish between good and poor ideas.
- Look at the consequences of the ideas. Encourage children to consider the question, What might happen if you _____? OR How will Mary feel if you_____?
- Is this a win-win alternative? Will this idea work for all people involved?
- If no idea is acceptable, ask children how to make the ideas more workable.

5. Ask for a decision and help children plan

List the alternatives, ask the children for a decision, help them plan how to implement the idea, and decide on a time to evaluate the plan.

- List the alternatives. Remember to include all ideas-even the ones you don't like.
- Plan implementation. What do the children need to do first?
- Plan time to evaluate. Decide on a time to review the plan and see if it was successful. If the solution is not working, choose another idea or go back and identify the problem again. If the idea was successful...
- Congratulate the children on finding a solution.

Resource: *Pick up Your Socks* by Elizabeth Carry

[Family Activity Handout]

PUPPET MAKING

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Scissors
- Color crayons/ marking pens/ chalk / paint
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue stick or glue
- Yarn or string

Optional Items Needed:

- Paper holes from a hole puncher
- Construction paper or colored paper

WHAT TO DO:

- Make stick puppets by coloring and cutting out a figure. You can add yarn for hair, hole punches for eyes and glue onto the puppet.
- When your children argue, help them create a puppet show re-enacting the disagreement.
- After they complete their "shows", talk about how they resolved their differences. Ask questions like:
- How did each individual feel about what the other said? About what the other did?
- Did the children like the outcome?
- What other possibilities could there be for outcomes?
- When future arguments occur, remind the children what they learned from their "puppet show" about getting along.

Source: University of California Cooperative Extension School-Age Child Care and Parenting Program