

Handling Sibling Rivalry: Building Cooperation and Respect Among Siblings

Effective Parenting Strategies

- Talking w/ respect
- Calm tone
- Gentle touch
- Eye contact
- Get down to child's level
- Plan ahead – give notice of time, remind child of rule
- Empathy
- Offer choices
- Saying “no” effectively
- Firm & Kind approach
- Keep your cool – avoid yelling and avoid power struggles
- Loving guidance – guide the child to the correct behavior

Lessening Sibling Rivalry

I. Things To Do:

- a) Ways to Encourage Positive Sibling Relationships
 1. Comment on Positive/Encourage relationship
 2. Create opportunities for child to “overhear”
 3. Create opportunities to do things together
 4. Encourage Teamwork
 5. Teach children to take turns and trade
 6. Model respect/ Demonstrate self-control
 7. Teach Empathy
 8. Teach Repair
- b) Treat uniquely not equally (fair does not mean equal)
- c) Allow appropriate expression of negative feelings about siblings

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II. Things To Avoid:

1. Comparisons
 - Positive Comparisons
 - Negative Comparisons
2. Praising in presence of siblings
3. Labeling
4. Forced Sharing
5. Having a Favorite
6. Rescuing

Managing Sibling Conflict

1. **Teach** children how to work out their conflicts
2. Send the message that your children are responsible for the fight and for the solution
3. Do not take sides
4. Use calm, accepting tone vs. disgusted, critical tone
5. Empathize with the feelings
6. Encourage problem solving
7. Say "I know you can figure this out"
8. Use "settling down time/cooling off period" when children's emotions are out of control and/or highly emotional
7. Teach children that they have options:
 - A. When there's a fight, take a hike
 - B. Use the conflict resolution strategies that they have been taught
 - C. Decide on "Settling Down Time/Cooling Off Period"