



Wee Learn

Wee Learners
(4 - 5 years):
Sibling Rivalry



As long as there is more than one child in the house, sibling rivalry is inevitable. The bane of many parents' existence, sibling fighting often leaves Moms and Dads feeling exhausted and worn out by all the bickering and teasing, and wondering why their kids seem to fight so much.

They want to find out how they can promote a warm and close relationship between their offspring that will carry forward into their children's adulthood

The following list is more general and encourages a parental attitude that will minimize rivalry. But remember, some conflicts will inevitably exist as long as you have more than one child at home.

1. Treat your children as the unique individuals they are. Make each child feel special. Each person's needs, feelings, and perspectives are important.
2. Don't show favouritism. Do not compare your children to one another either favourably or unfavourably.
3. Stay calm and objective. Stay out of arguments that are only harmless bickering.
4. Make need rather than fairness the basis for decisions. In response to the common complaint from children that *"It's not fair,"* tell your children, *"Fair does not mean equal; it means giving each person what they need."*
5. Come up with a list of basic rules that fit your family values
6. Don't look for someone to blame or punish. Your children will learn more by working out the problem with each other.
7. Don't referee a fight if you don't know what happened. Focus instead on the misdeed itself, invoke the already established family rule that prohibits the act, and disapprove of it. Remember, you don't have to worry about *"who started it;"* you did, by having more than one child!
8. Don't get in long discussions about what happened; all of that attention you are giving your children is a reward for the arguing and fighting.





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9. Encourage communication and understanding of feelings among siblings. Help children to develop a sense of empathy and a respect for how their siblings feel.

10. Let your children know that you believe they can be creative about finding solutions to problems with their brothers and sisters; help them learn the skill of problem solving.

11. Be aware of developmental stages. Young children have a hard time-sharing. They need to "possess" before they can share.

12. Do not force children to be friends with their siblings. This may come in time, when they are ready, and through their own wishes. However, you can insist that they treat each other respectfully

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