

SIBLING RIVALRY

Managing Sibling
Relationships in Real
Time



Presented to: New Canaan Cares

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WHY DO SIBLINGS STRUGGLE?

- All Children, regardless of position in family (1st, middle, 3rd) have a deep desire for the EXCLUSIVE love and attention from their parents!
- The existence of a sibling could signify LESS
LESS TIME, LESS LOVE, LESS APPROVAL
- Worth Less
- LEADS TO
 - Needing more / Needing most

STOP THE CONFLICT BEFORE IT HAPPENS

Prepare the sibling before baby's arrival

- ★ Talk about the future baby humanizing ways
 - What do you think the baby is feeling right now?
 - Do you think she is sleeping in my belly?
- ★ Explain what will happen when the baby arrives/Expectations
- ★ Not an instant playmate
- ★ Where can the baby be touched?
- ★ What will the baby need?
- ★ How can you help?



THE OLDER SIBLING

They will feel excited BUT...

- ★ Will notice they are no longer getting all the attention
Feel Angry | Do harm | “Get Rid of Them”

DO

- ★ Provide one-to-one time
- ★ Reinforce your older sibling when they do something kind and helpful
- ★ Acknowledge the emotions, but set limits

THE MIDDLE SIBLING

- ★ They too feel the loss of attention
- ★ They feel as if they have to do it better
- ★ Confused as to their role in the family

DO

- ★ Offer reassurance and explanation
- ★ Don't leave them out: Attention and Praise: Tune in
- ★ No Hand Me Downs if it can be helped
- ★ Capture their moments too!

THE YOUNGER SIBLING

Feels angry because they do not have all the PRIVILEGES the older siblings have

DO

- ★ Point out the privileges they **DO** have
- ★ Think of new privileges they **CAN** have
- ★ Always find ways to provide praise and reinforcement for their accomplishments

PREVENT THE RIVALRY

- ★ Help Children Develop the **FUN** in their relationship
- ★ Model the Behavior you want to **SEE**
- ★ Create a “Family Charter”
- ★ Encourage children to Stop and Think
- ★ Peer Mediation
- ★ Cultivate Empathy
- ★ Invite Emotions In
- ★ Focus on Individual Needs, not Equal Amounts
- ★ Love Uniquely

"THEY'RE FIGHTING, WHAT DO I DO?"

- ★ Normal Bickering
- ★ Ignore their behavior
- ★ Let them try to work it through



SITUATION IS ESCALATING

- ★ Acknowledge their emotions
- ★ Reflect on each child's point of view
- ★ Describe the problem with understanding and respect
- ★ Express Confidence they can solve the problem and then leave the room.



SITUATION ESCALATING, FURTHER!

- ★ Describe what you see
- ★ Set a cooling off period
- ★ Let them know it is not safe to stay together
- ★ Separate the children to their safe spots
- ★ After the cooling off period, begin peer mediation



PEER MEDIATION: RESOLVE CONFLICT

1. Lay Down the Ground Rules. Obtain consent to move forward!
 - a. One child talks at a time. (you can draw straws so it's neutral)
 - b. No interruptions
2. Ask each child their feelings and concerns. Rephrase their thoughts and feelings and concerns.
3. Foster mutual empathy and understanding.
 - a. It must have felt awful when “Johnny said that to you?” or “Hitting must have hurt.”
 - b. Ask that each child repeat what they heard the other say.
4. Brainstorm solutions to the problem.
 - a. Reel in far fetched ideas
 - b. Decide the solution that works best for everyone.

THE DON'TS

- ★ Don't suppress their emotions
- ★ Don't give attention to the Aggressor
- ★ Don't send the sibling away that said or did something
- ★ Don't treat a sibling like a bully
- ★ Don't treat a sibling like the victim
- ★ Don't make statements that add nothing to the problem
 - "Stop it"
 - "Why can't you get along?"
 - "Why did you do that?"

