

Reducing Jealousy Between Siblings



The sibling relationship is the longest lasting relationship between two or more people. Children born into the same family share a common family history from birth to death. The family provides support to develop and test social skills such as competition, and other ways of relating.

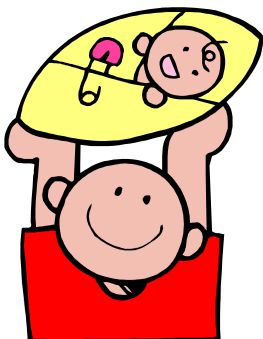
Jealousy between siblings often leads to feelings of anger, frustration and sadness. Ask children to express their feelings to you with words, pictures or activities. It's hard for parents to accept that their children have these feelings for their sister or brother. However, your acceptance, or unconditional love, will help your children feel better about themselves. As they feel more confident, they will be less jealous.

Here are a few tips to reduce jealousy:

- Treat children as individuals, give based on "need" rather than equality.
- Rather than insisting on "sharing", let children take turns, using a clock or timer to keep track of time.
- Describe qualities in your children, but avoid comparisons or nicknames based on skills -- "you are the smartest boy", "the lazy one",...instead try, "You are helpful when you pick up your toys."
- Separate your children. Give each some private time and space. Help each child learn to respect the privacy of others.
- Make each child feel special. Spend some time alone with each child as often as you can.
- Use rules, both simple and specific, to guide behavior.
- Help children learn to settle differences without you as a referee. Many fights will end on their own, without your intervention. Resist the temptation to "get to the bottom of it".
- Give your children a chance to solve problems themselves. Help them build problem solving skills by giving them choices.

This information is provided by: Washington State University Cooperative Extension in Spokane County.

Source: Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish, Siblings Without Rivalry, Carole and Andrew Calladine, and Haim Ginott, Between Parent and Child . Prepared by Chris Koehler.S



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