How to deal with Sibling fighting
(Rabie-Ajoony, 1995)

1. Deal with your feelings first (drop your fantasies about fairness, bliss, and harmony)
2. Do not rely on your children to resolve their fights themselves.
4. Intervene to help settle disagreements (identify who is favoured and who is unfavoured and try to balance the odds)
5. Try to be as objective as possible.
6. Use any method to cope with fight that works to end it acceptably.
7. Decide how much fighting is enough.
8. Constantly reassure your children that you love them.

Parental Flexibility
(Ram, 2001)

- Parent has to be flexible in managing a wide range of goals:
  - short-term and long-term goals;
  - each child’s safety, rights, and privileges;
  - promoting positive sibling relationship
  - modeling positive conflict resolution;
  - keeping the family harmonious.
Three Levels of Conflict in the Family
(Mock, 1997)

1. Parent-parent conflict
2. Parent-offspring conflict
3. Sibling competition
   - All three dimension interact
   - Need simultaneous solutions to all three dimensions.

siblings

- Sibling relationship
- Sibling rivalry
- Sibling conflict
- Sibling aggression
- Sibling illness or disability, and the forgotten sibling
- Step-siblings and half-siblings
- Sibling incest
- Death of a sibling

Learning Objectives

- Review of the literature on Birth-order, Non-shared environment, and Jealousy.
- Review of the research on sibling relationships and aggression.
- Review of the research on interventions in sibling conflicts.
- Review of resources on managing sibling rivalry.
- Learn what to tell parents.
The Evolution of Sibling Rivalry in the animal kingdom
(Mock, 1997)

I. Resource-based sibling rivalry:
   A. Lethal
      1. Aggression brood reduction
         - obligate siblicide
         - facultative siblicide
      2. Non-aggressive brood reduction
      3. Filial infanticide
   B. Non-lethal
      1. Aggression-based: low level of fighting to get resources (e.g. piglets)
      2. Scramble: motor competition for limited parental resources

II. Sibling cannibalism

Rudolf Dreikurs (1897 – 1972)
(Dreikurs, 1957)

- Three areas in the home where “efficient methods” are needed to raise children:
  1. Maintaining order
  2. Avoiding conflict
  3. Encouraging

Key Dimensions of Parenting
(Mrazek, 1995)

- **EMOTIONAL AVAILABILITY**
  - Degree of emotional warmth.
- **CONTROL**
  - Degree of flexibility and permission.
- **KNOWLEDGE BASE**
  - Understanding emotional and physical development as well as basic child care principles.
- **COMMITMENT**
  - Adequate prioritization of child care responsibilities.
Birth Order
(Bode, 1991)
1st Born: - disciplined more harshly, leader or lazy, lose attention to 2nd born.
2nd Born: - feels inadequate and becomes realistic perfectionist.
3rd Born: - arrived into already complicated family, charming troublemaker.
4th Born: - constantly hear not big enough, no one listen to you, babied by everyone.
➢ Birth Order account for only 10% of your behaviour to others.

Birth Order
(Brazelton, 2005)
Oldest child: - everyone expects the oldest to grow up quickly and has high expectations. Role model for siblings.
Middle child: - deserted by everyone, no one expects much.
Last child or the baby: - everyone makes allowances, labels him "spoilt", being cute doesn't cut it anymore.
➢ The younger child wants to imitate and be like the older child.

Alfred Adler’s concepts on Birth Order
(Campbell, 1991)
Oldest child feel powerful, because was only one for awhile.
Second child always follows footsteps of first, and becomes squeezed when third child is born. Has to compete with both oldest and youngest.
Third or last child follows in footsteps of all those ahead.
Alfred Adler’s concept of Psychological Birth Order (Campbell, 1991)

• “It is not the child’s number in the order of successive births which influences his character, but the situation into which he is born and the way in which he interprets it.”

• Psychological birth order is the self-perceived place in the family structure.

➢ More important to understand psychological birth order.

Sibling Relationship

• Life long.
• Love-hate
• Emotionally ambivalent

➢ Sibling competition for parental love is an important driving force in human evolution.

Study on the Development of Sibling Relationships (Kim, 2006)

• Study examined the changes in sibling intimacy and conflict from middle childhood through adolescence.
• 200 Caucasian – middle class 2-parent families.
• Firstborn mean age 11.8 years at beginning of study; secondborn 9.2 years.
• Collection of data began in 1995 with interviews every year to 7 years.
Findings on the Normal Developmental Path of Sibling Relationships (Kim, 2006)

- Studies show sibling support and intimacy are lower in adolescence than in middle childhood.
- Studies show sibling positivity and intimacy are lower in early adolescence and higher in late adolescence.

Forces in the Normal Developmental Path of Adolescent Sibling Relationships (Kim, 2006)

- Increase interest in friends and world outside the family and less time at home may lower sibling closeness and conflict in adolescence.
- Adolescent cognitive and social maturity may improve sibling relationship.

Two factors linked to the Quality of sibling relationship (Kim, 2006)

1. **Structural characteristics** of the dyad (child gender, sex pair constellation, birth order, and sibling age spacing).

2. **Family dynamics.**
Structural factors in Sibling Relationship Development (Kim, 2006)
- Girls report closer and more affectionate sibling relationships than boys.
- Sister-sister pairs report higher positivity.
- Siblings were more intimate when the age difference was larger.

Family Dynamic factors in Sibling Relationship Development (Kim, 2006)
- Mothers and fathers adopt different roles with their children: *mothers focus on caregiving, and fathers focus on play and leisure.*
- Mothers and fathers also differ in their level of involvement with their children: *fathers are less available.*

Findings from the Study on the Development of Sibling Relationships (Kim, 2006)
- **Sisters reported more intimacy overall.**
- Same-sex pairs reported no changes in intimacy over time.
- **Mixed-sex pairs reported decline in intimacy from middle childhood to early adolescence, and then increase in intimacy in middle adolescence (e.g. one ask the other about information on dating).**
Findings from the Study on the Association between Sibling Relationships and Marital Relationships (Kim, 2006)

- Maternal acceptance was linked to sibling intimacy.
- Father’s acceptance was not linked to sibling intimacy.
- Sibling conflict was linked to both father-child and mother-child conflict.
  - When fathers reported being less happy in their marriages, siblings reported being closer and less conflictual (may be a compensatory process).

Psychoanalytic explanation of sibling favoritism from an object relationship perspective (Akhtar, 1999)

1. Parents initially have an idealized fantasy of the future of their children and their children’s relationship.
2. Even under the best conditions, this idealized fantasy meets disappointment and how parents handle this disappointment affects the sibling relationship.
3. If there are mental health problems within or between the parents, then the parents do not mourn this disappointment.
4. Splitting occurs and one child becomes the good object and the other the bad object. The child who is not favoured feels or is rejected

Thoughts on Favoritism (Rabie-Ajoony, 1995)

- Favoritism is universal; there is always favoritism in parents’ attitude to their children.
- Parents have good intentions.
- Children have a deep desire to please their parents.
Reasons for Favoritism (Rabie-Ajoony, 1995)

- Temperament or spirit of the child.
- Child’s gender.
- Child’s appearance and resemblance.
- Birth order: favour oldest or youngest.
- Physical attributes: such as sports or no sports.

> One child may bring out unconscious reactions in parents over which they have little awareness.

Nonshared environmental variations (within family differences) (Reiss, 1994)

- Finding that children raised in the same home are often different from one another than being similar.

Nonshared environment (Plomin, 2001)

- It is genetics, not shared experiences that make siblings resemble each other.

- The environment does not result in sibling similarity.

- Children growing up in the same family experience different environments.
Environmental factors that cause children in the same family to be different (Plomin, 2001)

A. **Nonsystemic factors:**
   - perinatal events. Illnesses, trauma.

B. **Systemic factors:**
   ii) Relationships between family members: differential treatment or perceptions.
   iii) Extra-family experiences with friends, teachers, and other people.

Methodology of the Nonshared Environment in Adolescent Development (NEAD) project (Plomin, 2001)

- Ten years long.
- 719 families with 2 same sex siblings from age 10-18 no more than 4 years apart.
- 2 videotaped visits 2 weeks apart (each 2 hours long) made at 3 year intervals.
- Questionnaires and interviews to parents and children about family environment.

Findings of the Nonshared Environment in Adolescent Development (NEAD) project (Plomin, 2001)

- **Nonshared environmental effects were mediated by genetic factors.**
  - This means that the parents’ different treatment of siblings is because of the difference in genetics of the siblings.
- **“Genetics contributes substantially to experience”**.
  - “Children select, modify, construct and reconstruct their experiences in part on the basis of their genetic propensities”.
- **Child’s genetic propensities influence parental behaviour.**
Conclusion of the Nonshared Environment in Adolescent Development (NEAD) project (Pike, 1997)

- "Results suggest that the parental contribution to parent-child relationships is substantially child-driven in the sense that parental behaviour reflects genetic differences among children".
  - "friendships may be important contributors to the nonshared environment".

Three laws of behavior genetics (Turkheimer, 2000)

1. **First Law:** All human behavioral traits are heritable/genetically based.
2. **Second Law:** The effects of being raised in the same family are smaller than the effects of the members’ genes.
3. **Third Law:** A lot of the variation in complex human behavioral traits is not found to be due to genetics or family environment. *(nonshared events account for less than 2% of the variance)*

Variation in Human Behavioural Traits

- Genetics: - about 50%
- Non-shared environment 2%
- Unknown 48%
Sibling Jealousy
(Volling, 2002)

• “Most powerful jealousy of youth”.
• “Total rage”.
• “Ferocious”.
• “Outrageous”.
• Little consistency across relationships: - very specific to one triangle.

What is Jealousy?
(Volling, 2002)

• Jealousy occurs in the context of a Social Triangle.
• Jealousy is triggered by the real or perceived loss of the beloved individual to the rival (loss of formative attention).
• Jealousy can occur in nonromantic relationships.

The Jealousy Complex
(Volling, 2002)

• Jealousy is an explanation of the emotional experience.
• Jealousy is an organized pattern of emotions, thoughts, and actions: -
  - Cognitive appraisal of the potential loss to the rival or betrayal.
  - Emotional expression of sadness or anger.
  - Behavioural response of withdrawal or aggression.
How Preschool Siblings cope with Jealousy (Volling, 2002)

1. Attempts to interfere with the interaction between sibling and parent.
2. Directing hostility to either the sibling or parent.
3. Focus attention on an alternative pleasurable activities.
   • *Research study showed children as young as 1 year-old were sensitive to the mother paying attention to an infant-size doll (Dunn, 1982).*

“The Arsenic Hour”

• Sibling fighting worst during the hour before dinner, when parent is preparing dinner.

Sources of sibling conflict (Johnston & Freeman, 1989)

• *Most common is fight over toy possession.*
• Competition for toys and telephone.
• Competition for who goes first.
• Disagreements about whose turn it is to do dishes.
• Disagreements about who gets to choose the television program.
Frequency of Sibling conflict
(Perlman, 1997)
• In families with two preschool children, there was average of 7 times per hour of sibling conflict.

Sibling Conflict
(Johnston & Freeman, 1989)
• Most sibling interactions are positive.
• Studies observed sibling conflicts up to 8 times per hour.
• Most conflicts are mild (e.g. slapping, shoving)
• 42% of children were kicked, bitten, or punched by sibling.
• 3% of children used a weapon in a fight against their sibling.

Study of 360 preschool sibling pairs by Koch in 1960
(Connelly, 2000)
• 28% had severe and frequent quarrelling.
• 36% had moderate quarrelling.
• 35% had rare quarrelling.
Characteristics of Toys  
(Stoneman, 1983)

- Toys that are used cooperatively:
  - blocks, small toy cars, dolls and dollhouse equipment, housekeeping and kitchen toys, large toys such as seesaws and climbing apparatus and wagons.

- Toys that are least likely to be shared and most likely cause fights:
  - Fine-motor construction materials such as Tinkertoys, beads, puzzles, arts and crafts supplies.

Selecting Toys  
(Ramsey, 1986)

- Toys or objects that can be used in fantasy play or can be used by more than one child promote sharing.

- Toys or objects that need to be accumulated to be used, such as craft materials or Tinkertoys, are not easily shared and can contribute to sibling conflict.

Rudolf Dreikurs (1897 – 1972)  
(Dreikurs, 1957)

- Four goals of the “disturbing child”:
  1. Attention
  2. Power and superiority
  3. Revenge
  4. Display of inadequacy
Assumptions in perceptions of conflict (Ram, 2001)

1. Sibling conflict is a competition for parental love and attention; or material resources.

2. Sibling conflict is unacceptable and destructive.

3. Sibling conflict is a normative process of learning relationship skills.

Reasons for Sibling Aggression (Connelly, 2000)

- Displacement of anger: instead of hitting parent/teacher, child hits sibling.
- Expression of anger at family situation: turbulent home life, inconsistent parenting, unavailable parents, poverty.
- Parents as poor role model.
- Influence of Media violence.

Theoretical models of sibling violence (Hoffman, 2005)

- Feminist theory: implies boys will be more violent than girls because of patriarchal patterns of power in society.
- Conflict theory: anger over parental favoritism, over resources, over parental attention.
- Social Learning theory: model violence from physical punishment, parental violence, and from media (videogames, TV)
Family Environment Factors in Sibling Violence (Eriksen, 2006)

- Sibling violence may be the most common type of family violence but the least studied.

- Adult studies show adult brothers and sisters attribute their troubled relationships to sibling violence in childhood.

Study of Family Environment Factors in Sibling Violence (Eriksen, 2006)

- Family disorganization factors (marital stress, spousal violence, alcohol or drug use, power imbalance between husbands and wives, belief in physical punishment of children, and belief in rigid traditional gender roles) was the most significant predictor of sibling violence.

- Being fearful of father's temper may also contribute to the child having an aggressive impulse to physically harm a sibling in response.

Permeable Boundaries in Family Relationships (Brody, 1992)

- In laboratory simulated fights between strangers, children as young as 12 months-old witnessing this show distress, crying and increased aggression.
What Research confirms about Sibling Aggression
(Martin, 2005)

- **Preschool** girls and boys appear similar in use of aggression till age 3 years-old.

- **By 3 to 6 years-old**, boys show more overt physical aggression with peers than girls, and this difference continues into adolescence.

- Both boys and girls show verbal aggression: - threatening, harassing, etc.

What research tells us about parents' reaction to sibling aggression
(Martin, 2005)

- Differences in boys and girls aggression may be due to the parents' response: -
  a) Parents report they are more accepting of aggression in boys than in girls.
  b) Mothers show more tolerance for displays of anger in infant sons than in daughters.
  c) Parents actively promote intense physical competitive play with action toys more with boys than girls.
  d) Parents use punitive methods (commands, punishment) more with boys (danger of modeling aggression)
  e) Parents use explanations more with girls.

Parent-child interactions
(Johnston & Freeman, 1989)

- Studies confirm positive Parent-Child interactions is associated with positive sibling interactions; and negative Parent-Child interactions associated with sibling conflict.

- Studies have consistently found that the mother's presence is associated with increased level of sibling conflict.

- Sibling fighting is reduced when parents learn to ignore, consequence positive interactions, and consequence fighting.

- Inequality in the parental treatment of their children is associated with sibling conflict.
Study of association between sibling conflict and family relationship  
(Brody, 1992)
- Observational Study of 152 Caucasian children in same gender sibling pairs in families with two parents. (Older child age 7 – 14 years/ mean 10.2; younger age 5 – 12/ mean 7.6)  
- Unequal treatment from fathers was associated with sibling conflict behaviours.  
- Unequal treatment from mothers may not provoke anger or rivalrous emotions.

Resolution of Sibling conflict  
(Ram, 2001)
- When tempers are not high, children as young as 2 ½ years old can resolve conflict with constructive negotiation.  
- Siblings aged 2 to 8 years old use positive conflict strategies in less than 5% of conflicts.  
- Preschool children use conciliatory conflict resolution between 5% and 9% of conflicts.

Study on How siblings resolve conflicts of interests  
(Ram, 2001)
- Study of 48 sibling dyads (half were aged 4 and 6; other half aged 6 and 8) sharing a set of six toys in a laboratory setting.  
- Three types of strategies observed: - 
  1. Problem solving.  
  2. Contention.  
  3. Struggle.
Findings of Study on How siblings resolve conflicts of interests
(Ram, 2001)
• 33% of sibling pairs were able to achieve win-win solutions.
• 10% of pairs showed no resolution.
• Older siblings showed leadership in the interaction and more ability to problem solve.

Study on Maternal cognition about sibling conflict
(Piotrowski, 1999)
• Home visits and structured questions to 48 two-parent families with at least two children (younger sibling average age 4 years-old; older sibling average 7 years-old).
• Research showed two main attributional styles: -
  1. Parents attribute their children’s behaviour to internal factors.
  2. Parents attribute to external factors.

Should parents intervene or not?
There is research both for and against parental intervention in sibling conflicts.
Is the sibling conflict maintained or not by parental attention?

- Dreikurs in his classic book in 1964 “Children the Challenge” advised parents **to do nothing when faced with sibling conflict.**
- *Theory was that:* 
  - The fighting was to gain parental attention.
  - Doing nothing lets kids work out a solution.
  - Allows balance of power between siblings.

**Disadvantages on Intervening** (Perlman, 1997)

- **Intervening makes parents the judge,** and may lead to favoritism. (Intervening usually supports the younger sibling, and this may be seen as favoritism and lead to more conflict.)
- **Intervening deprives children an opportunity to learn conflict resolution,** assuming that they will resolve it positively.
- **Intervening may reward children with attention** for fighting.

**Disadvantages of Not Intervening** (Perlman, 1997)

- Nonintervention may lead to tyranny of the bigger child and learnt helplessness with the weaker child.
- Nonintervention may give a message to the children that their aggression is condoned.
Intermediate position regarding intervention (Perlman, 1997)

- *Parents intervene only when there is intense conflict:* physical violence, verbal abuse, or losing control.
- *Intervention should be neutral, consistent, verbally explicit, focused on problem solving, perspective taking, and communication between the children.*

Models that support intervention (Perlman, 1997)

1. Moral internalization.
2. Modeling.
3. Scaffolding.

Five ways parents respond to sibling conflict (Washo, 1992)

1. Power assertion (parents using their power to punish children).
2. Commands to stop fighting (telling children to immediately stop; e.g. “Cut it out!”).
3. Conflict avoidance (distracting or redirecting children to a different activity).
5. Nonintervention (ignoring conflict).
Types of Intervention  
(Kramer, 1999)

- Mothers tend to use child-centered methods (facilitate discussion of child’s needs and exploring child’s feelings) more often than fathers.
- Children respond differently to conflict management by their mothers than by their fathers.

Classifying Interventions

1. **Passive nonintervention** – kids left to sort things out themselves.
2. **Active nonintervention** – parents remind kids to use their learnt skills to resolve their conflict ("scaffold").
3. **Passive intervention** – simple removal or separation of kids; coercive punishment.
4. **Active intervention** – parents help directly in resolving conflict; consequences.

Observations of Parent interventions in preschool siblings

- Studies observed mothers intervening in 50% of sibling conflicts. (Johnston & Freeman, 1989)
- Mothers use passive nonintervention (let kids works out their difficulties on their own) in 45% of conflicts. (Kramer, 1999)
- Fathers use passive nonintervention in 56%. (Kramer, 1999)
- Parents did not intervene in 43% of conflicts they observed. (Kramer, 1999)
Study of Parents’ responses to preschool sibling conflict – part one (Kramer, 1999)

- Study of 88 two-children (secondborn 3-5 years-old and firstborn 2-4 years older) two-parent families with 3 home observations.

- Researchers have found children get into more antagonistic behaviors when their mothers are present.
- Conflicts with parental intervention last longer than without.

Study of Parents’ responses to preschool sibling conflict – part two (Kramer, 1999)

- Some research showed parental intervention in sibling conflict had two benefits: reduced future conflicts and helped children learn problem resolution.

- A study reviewing videotapes of 52 families eating dinner, mothers intervened more than fathers in children’s conflicts; fathers used more authoritarian methods; and mothers used more mediation.

Study of Parents’ responses to sibling conflict – part three (Kramer, 1999)

- Whether parents should intervene or not depends on:
  - Developmental level of child.
  - Gender of the responding parent.
  - Type of intervention parents select.
Findings from the Study of Parents’ response to sibling conflict (Kramer, 1999)

- **Key finding is that there is less continued conflict if parents intervened in their children’s conflict than when they did not.**
- **Parental intervention in their children’s conflicts may be more effective in younger sibling pairs than older.**
- **Mothers and fathers intervene in their children’s conflicts to about the same amount.**

Teaching parents to educate their children in social skills that will help sibling relationships (Tiedemann, 1992)

- Parents teach children after parents attended a 5 session parent training program: -
  - “Inviting” and “Requesting”
  - “Granting requests” and “Accepting invitations”
  - Different ways to share and play.
  - “Appropriate refusal” and “Handling refusals”
  - Handling anger
  - Developing constructive ways to deal with disputes.
- **Positive results maintained over 6 weeks compared to waitlist controls.**

Peer mediation program (Gentry, 1993)

1. Teachers are trained in a 2 hour session conflict-awareness exercises that they use in their classrooms.
2. Children in Grade 4 to 6 are nominated by peers and teachers to be conflict managers.
3. These children conflict managers are trained in a 6 hour session in communication and conflict resolution skills.
4. These conflict managers mediate conflicts of their peers during recess.
5. Parents of these children conflict managers reported less sibling conflicts at home.
Reinforcement of appropriate sibling interactions (Leitenberg, 1977)

- **Two techniques:**
  1. **Omission training**, and
  2. **Reinforcement of an appropriate alternative behaviour**.

  - Tested techniques on 6 families with two or three children age 2 – 10.
  - Both equally reduced sibling conflict to 50% of baseline levels.

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Omission Training (Leitenberg, 1977)

- Reinforcing siblings for not being in a conflict during a specific time period.
- During the specific time period, siblings are rewarded with praise and a penny for each minute without conflict.
- If conflict occurs, the parents withhold the reward and ignore the conflict.

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Reinforcement of alternative behavior strategy (Leitenberg, 1977)

- The parents provide praise and pennies on the first occurrence of appropriate behavior.
- If conflict occurs, the parents ignore the behavior.
- **This strategy produced greater increase in appropriate sibling interactions than the omission training.**
Nonintervention by Parents  
(Kramer, 1999)

- Passive nonintervention by mothers was linked with more positive and negative sibling interactions for younger siblings.
- Passive nonintervention by fathers was linked with only negative sibling interaction for younger siblings.
- Passive nonintervention by mothers was associated with only positive sibling interactions for older siblings.

Parents withdrawing contingent attention (Levi, 1977)

- Even when parents reinforce appropriate sibling interactions, sibling conflict can still occur.
- For older children, parental intervention in conflicts can actually reinforce more fighting and arguing.
- Parents are instructed not to intervene if the children are old enough to sort out their own problems.

Parenting approach  
(Johnston & Freeman, 1989)

- For younger child, more parent-imposed solutions to sibling conflict.
- For older child, promote more child-generated solutions.
- If conflict is not maintained by parental attention, then negative consequences are effective.
Exploration of Emotion (Kramer, 1999)

- Few parents explore their children’s emotions during conflicts.
- Empathetic responding may be helpful.

Review of 3 popular books on sibling rivalry

Loving Each One Best: a caring and practical approach to raising siblings

Book by Nancy Samalin (1996)
Sibling wars without end  
(Samalin, 1996)

• Most futile question is “Who started it?”
• How can your intervention not escalate and make things worst?
• How can your intervention help them problem solve?

Parents working together  
(Samalin, 1996)

1. Expect to disagree because the parents were brought up in different families.
2. Do not let your kids divide and conquer.
3. Do not contradict your spouse in front of the kids.
4. Do not play the middle person and encourage your child to talk directly to your spouse.
5. Do not try to convince your spouse that he or she is wrong.

5 Categories in techniques to deal with sibling rivalry  
(Samalin, 1996)

1. Consequences.
2. Clarification.
3. Negotiation.
5. Empowerment.
Avoiding the Fairness Trap
(Samalin, 1996)

- Do not keep saying “Life is unfair”.
- Respond to desire, not the complaint.
- Recognize the ways you are programmed to react.
- Give your kids permission to disagree.
- Enlist your kids to help make things fair.
- Tickle their funny bones.
- Equality is not always the best.
- Do not make Fairness your goal.

Understanding Sibling Rivalry
The Brazelton Way

Book by
T. Berry Brazelton &
Joshua D. Sparrow (2005)

Brazelton’s way of defusing persistent squabbles
(Brazelton, 2005)

- Make sure younger child is safe. Remove dangerous toys. Separate children if hitting gets out of control.
- Distract older child.
- After stopping fight, hug each one and reassure them you are here to help them, but it is their job to learn to get along.
- Read stories about angry situations.
**Book: Siblings Without Rivalry**  
(Faber, 1987)

- **When bad feelings come out:**
  - "Brothers and sisters need to have their feelings about each other acknowledged."
  - "Children need to have their hurtful actions stopped."
  - "Children need to be shown how to discharge angry feelings acceptably. (We do not permit children to hurt each other.)"

- **How parents perceive their children:**
  - "Resist the urge to compare."
  - "Children do not have to be treated equally, they need to be treated uniquely."
  - "Let no one lock a child into a role."
  - "Children with problems do not need to be viewed as problem children."
Book: Siblings Without Rivalry (Faber, 1987)

- **How to Handle the Fighting:**
  - Level 1: Normal Bickering
  - Level 2: Situation Heating up.
  - Level 3: Situation possibly dangerous.
  - Level 4: Situation definitely dangerous!
    Adult intervention necessary.

Book: Siblings Without Rivalry (Faber, 1987)

- **Helping Children Resolve a Difficult Conflict:**
  1. Call a meeting with the children involved and explain the purpose of the meeting.
  2. Explain the ground rules - no interruptions.
  3. Write down each child's feelings and concerns. Read them out loud and make sure you understand them correctly.
  4. Allow each child time for rebuttal.
  5. Invite everyone to suggest as many solutions as possible. Let kids go first. Write down all ideas.
  6. Decide upon the solutions you can live with.

Preparation for Newborn (Dunn, 1982)

- When mothers discussed care of their newborn baby and involved their preschool children, their preschool children showed more prosocial behaviours with their younger siblings when the babies were 14 months old.
Preparing siblings for the birth of a new sibling
• Praising siblings for their assistance.
• Help siblings be essential part of the family.
• Involve older siblings in day-to-day care of younger child.

Take Home Message
• Immediate strategies
• Long term strategies.
• Preventive strategies.

➢ Most sibling interactions are positive!

Immediate Strategy

For preschool siblings:
• Intervene in younger sibling pair.
• Parent imposed solutions.
• Use Brazelton’s advice.

For older siblings:
• If in no danger, do not intervene.
• Child-generated solutions.
Long term Strategies

*For older siblings*: -
- Use Faber and Mazlish’s advice.
- Use Samalin’s advice.

Preventive Strategies for all ages

1. Prenatal preparation.
2. Embracing family principles:
   - Usually focus on building positive relationships between siblings.
   - Focus on increasing cooperation and reducing violence in the family environment.
   - Develop “House rules”.
   - Labeling of children’s possessions.
   - Consider family’s ethnic background.

Preventive strategies for all ages

3. Develop “special time” with each child:
   - Develop fairness in their allocation of time and attention between siblings, especially fathers.
   - Develop “special time” with each child.
Preventive Strategies for all ages

4. Enhance parental self-awareness: -
   • How the past influences the parent (Ghosts in the Nursery)
   • Understand your child’s temperament (genetic differences among children).
   • Aware that boys are allowed more aggression.

Components of parent training interventions for sibling conflict (Johnston & Freeman, 1989)

5. Ensure adequate parenting: -
   • Give normal child developmental information.
   • Give basic information about parenting and help parents to be consistent.
   • Check parents’ assumptions about sibling relationships and conflicts.

Preventive Strategies for older children

6. Scheduling: -
   • Posting list in the kitchen with date and name of the person who last took out the garbage.
   • Posting list of whose turn it is to choose what to watch on TV.
   • Putting a timer by the phone or computer.
   • Limit time on telephone or computer.
References


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