

## **Additional Notes and Content**

Don't you hate it when your kids are agitating one another, screeching and crying out for your rescue? How will they learn to resolve their own conflicts if you jump in and do it for them?

Squibbling Rivalry can have significant impact on the quality of life for a family. This video will delve into the issues, the teachable moments, and some solutions for the bane of many parents' existence!

First consider the impact of intervening in quarrels as a parent. How will they learn to settle their own conflicts? These are not the bane of your existence, these are the teachable moments you can use to support your children in learning how to address issues of belonging, problem-solving, conflict resolution, property rights, boundaries, and emotional control.

### **Jealousy**

Jealousy is born of having expectations and desires not met but granted to another. The more attentive and loving a parent, the more likely the child will expect attentive care and be upset when not getting it.

Happy babies expect immediate exclusive parental care.

Loving attentive parents feel upset or ambivalent, confused and ineffective in the face of sibling rivalry and jealousy, often regarding it as a defect, when in fact it is normal. Understanding this will help you bring order to chaos.

### **Perspective**

I encourage you to think of conflicts between siblings as normal and an opportunity to teach skills rather than a problem you must control or eliminate.

### **Teachable moments and skills you can coach:**

Emotional control

Respect for and maintenance of boundaries

Problem solving

Meeting needs for belonging

Taking responsibility for your boredom and entertainment

Learning to share

### **Genetically programmed to win?**

In nature if there is a conflict with someone else or another animal they may be between you and your food, spouse, children, shelter, or the territory that feeds you. So it would be adaptive to strike first and strive to win at all costs, because your survival depends on it. You love your kids right? So if they want to fight, maybe you should let them. Most kids love their siblings and are not going to put one another in the hospital over whose turn it was. They need to learn skills for navigating conflicts and how to fight fairly and when you can win and when you may not. Your bigger one needs to learn not to use full force against a lesser opponent. Your littler one needs to learn to defer to a greater force. You don't want the little one to tell his boss "That's a stupid way to do it, and I'm not going to do it that way." She'll be fired. Sometimes, it's good to recognize the greater power over you and accede. Swallow your pride and don't argue with positional authority.

### **Why stay out of it?**

Intervening Fails to teach skills

Teaches helplessness and dependence- the need for someone else to step in

Dilemma for more powerful child- As long as you are stepping into the quarrels, this is how it goes; if he let's his little brother have the remote, so the little brother doesn't screech and bring you running getting him in trouble, *he loses*, if he uses his greater force and rips the remote away; *he loses*, if you step in and make it a tie, divide the time, split it fairly, think about it, if you had a debate with the President and the judges declared a tie, wouldn't you feel like a winner? I just tied against the PRESIDENT!

and from his perspective, *he loses*.

So now the bigger One is going to be resentful of the little one and constantly pick away, because they get blamed for everything, it's never fair, and they feel ganged up on, the loser against a greater foe, and now you and the smaller siblings are the enemy, the bully, the perpetrator. Who cares what Mom says and if you get in trouble in these circumstances?

### **Dealing with Feelings**

Don't try to manage or disallow their feelings

Do reflect and downshift "You're annoyed that you lost" instead of "Why do you get so angry?" or "You are furious!"

Teach emotional recognition and management strategies

-self-talk

-activities

-breaks

## **Teaching Emotional Control**

Develop an emotional vocabulary- aggravated, frustrated, irritated, furious, etc.

Develop awareness- Describe what you see- "Your fists are clenched and your eyes are bugging out, on the inside you must be feeling... what?"

Creating a menu of coping strategies

Gradations- annoyed, angry, furious= Level 1, 2, 3

Matching the reaction to the size of the problem- Is this a big problem or a little problem?

Teaching self-talk- "I can handle it," "It's okay if I don't get my way all the time."

The pre-emptive strike

Model what you say- they are more likely to do as you do

Allow and reflect feelings- don't teach them to fear feelings

## **Property rights and sharing**

How to stand up for yourself for a toddler who grabs

- give them something else to play with

- work on a table where they can't reach

- compliment the child who is grabbed from before they have a chance to retaliate with physical force- Wow, Jack, look at you. Thank you for letting yourself be frustrated without hitting. You are such a kind, gentle big brother. I call this the "preemptive strike."

## **Respecting and establishing boundaries**

Set boundaries for yourself- the right to protect your ears and have your own time/privacy, don't be available 24/7

Your own needs for control vs. their need to learn

Use your energy to make your sister feel good- positive power

Allow them their own space when they want to be separate and get away

Telling vs. tattling

Unnecessary and critical corrections- zoo or veterinarian, is your older one modeling you?

Help redirect the toddler who doesn't understand yet

### **Consequences for Boundary Violations**

Require a repair before they are allowed to continue playing

Look at your brother's face. Are you using your energy to make him feel good? You will need to do something to make him feel good again.

### **Problem Solving**

Power and control- teach the kids about kinds of power and appropriate vs inappropriate use of power. Using your power to take away from someone who has less is abusive and unethical.

Power of position and personal power

Manipulation and coercion – no one should have absolute power all the time, you can't always control a person or situation, others have the right to make their own choices, teach respect and ways to deal with the frustration, give choices, teach emotional control and boundaries

Persuasive Power- motivational, other-interested, or self-interested and manipulative

Cooperative power is shared

### **Problem Solving Template**

Clarify the problem and clarify with Statement of empathy- I've noticed, you don't like it, you want that toy, you feel \_\_\_\_\_.

Invitation- can we talk about this?

Get all concerns on the table, yours, his, hers

Brainstorm solutions

Pick one that satisfies at least some of all concerns

Try it

Be ready that the first attempt may not work and may need to return to list of solutions.

### **Belonging and Connectedness**

Basic human need

Listening with full attention

Find out what they need and tell/show them how to get it

OFFER APPRECIATION TO ALL OF THEM

DON'T BE SO BUSY THAT YOU CANT STOP AND FOCUS ON WHAT THEY WANT TO SHOW AND TELL YOU, WITH LIMITS- if you are busy or on a call or worn out, explain this and tell them when you will be fully available to them

Teach appropriate ways to ask for what you want.

### **Blending adult issues**

- Savior
- Whose responsible?
- Accountability
- The judge, postured attitude, broadcasting
- = Escalation
- They respond to your thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes more than your words
- Be on the lookout for your intense reactions- these signify something that is YOUR issue to work on. When you are triggered into reaction, you lose your ability to be a flexible and reasonable problem solver.

### **Comparisons**

Why can't you keep up with your homework like your sister does?

-creates resentment, increases rivalry, lowers self-esteem, self- fulfilling prophecy

### **Role Casting**

The responsible one- taking on more than they need, assuming responsibility for others over self-boundary issues

Bad one attention for misbehavior and trouble

Younger and less capable, or striving to excel against unsurmountable competitors

Help them explore and realize choices and to know they can change or decide to be how they want to be- freedom to experiment

### **When and how to step in**

Normal quarrel- stay out, that's a bummer but you need to talk to your sister about that. I've seen how well you guys can work it out without hurting.

Getting louder- hey you guys sound upset, I think one wants \_\_\_\_\_ and the other wants \_\_\_\_\_. That can be difficult. I bet you will find a safe and fair way to work it out. You can't always make someone do what you want.

It's too loud or approaching unsafe. You both have to agree if you are playing that way. It's getting too loud for me. Try another way or take it somewhere else.

That's too much. I don't want to see you hurting anymore. Send them to separate spaces and give choices of alternate activities.

## **Temperament**

Remember also that children vary in dimensions such as the following and these will influence how they look and sound and behave in a conflict:

Activity level

Intensity

Approach-withdrawal

Adaptability

Sensitivity to sensory experience

Persistence

Regularity

Mood

Distractibility

## **Developmental Needs**

To experience the world with pleasure

To learn to trust one's own body and explore physically

To deal with feelings and gain admiration from adults

To be part of a group

Remember that what may look like inappropriate behavior such as a two year old grabbing and taking may be developmentally appropriate, the need to explore the environment and later learn cause and effect, empathy and boundaries/rules.

## **Faith**

- Your decision
- Unconditional positive regard
- What percentage of kids you have known did not get better?

This is vital to successful parenting. Choose to have faith that you will be a good enough parent, your kids will work through their issues in their own time, they will be good and they will be successful and they will learn to do the right thing in the end.

## **Energizing and creating success vs. punishment**

What we teach with punishment

What is discipline

You get what you give and what you pay attention to

Creating their self-image with your words, posture, attitude, thoughts

## **This message is for you!**

*I know you can do it. I believe in you even when you fail and struggle, complain, blame, and resist. My love for you is limitless, and the power of the love I have for you knows no bounds and is the same power that binds atoms together and powers the sun. Think of the power released when a hydrogen atom is split. You have access to this power at all times, it is there within you without limit, your only enemy darkness and fear, and you are connected to the source of all light and love against which no material or other energy can stand.*

-Brad Mason