

Getting to the root of sibling rivalry

December 27 2017, by Julie Davis, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Fights among your children can start for a variety of reasons, and sibling rivalry can take root even before your second child is born, according to experts at KidsHealth from the Nemours

Foundation.

Petty squabbles can escalate into all-out war because of jealousy, a sense of competition between siblings (and not only for your attention), children's changing needs, and even budding feelings of anxiety.

Each child's temperament and personality factor into how well he or she gets along with siblings. If one is easygoing while another is easily upset, tempers may flare.

The way Mom and Dad resolve their own disagreements will influence how their kids approach arguments. If you and your spouse show respect and a willingness to listen to each other during a fight, your kids will likely try to model your style.

You should set rules for what's acceptable behavior when fights do occur, but let kids try to solve problems on their own. Resist stepping in unless a [child](#) is in danger of [physical harm](#). You might need to separate overwrought kids until they calm down.

When you're called on to play mediator, look for a solution in which everyone wins, rather than focusing on who might be to blame. For instance, if they both want to play with the video console, either they play in tandem or each gets a turn, with the flip of a coin determining who goes first.

If you suspect that the fighting is to get your [attention](#), set aside some time for family activities that will make everyone happy.

More information: KidsHealth has much more on understanding sibling rivalry and [steps to diffuse it](#) for a more positive home environment.

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