

## Sibling Rivalry

Sibling Rivalry can be defined as the conflict, tension, fighting (physical and verbal) and jealousy experienced and exhibited between siblings/step-siblings. Sometimes you'll notice it starting after the birth of a younger child and look like when your older child wants to hit the baby or wants nothing to do with them. Sibling Rivalry can even happen when your children/step-children are a little older and may continue into adulthood. At any life stage sibling rivalry can cause stress for siblings and the whole family and is a normal part of growing up.

### Let's Reflect

Let's start by stating that all behavior is communication. The conflict between siblings/step-siblings is enviable and communicates a combination of two things, current or built up situations and feelings. The situations may be the lack of attention, not taking turns, competition, lack of privacy, not respecting personal boundaries etc... The feelings experienced may be out of boredom, frustration, jealousy, anger, embarrassment, isolation, sadness, and the need to connect etc.... that may be hard to process, control and or communicate with one another. The positive aspect of challenging situations and feelings is they don't last forever because time is on everyone's side. With time, we have the gift of growth, and a learning opportunity. The positive aspect of sibling rivalry is that it helps children learn to regulate their behaviour and feelings through challenges like power struggles, conflict and negotiations. It also allows enhanced opportunities for boundary setting and assertiveness to flourish with the ongoing adult support and guidance. Children are learning crucial social and resiliency skills to cope with difficult situations, people and feelings with respect and empathy.

### Let's Problem Solve

Here are some helpful strategies and tips to minimize sibling rivalry.

- Expect and accept that conflict between siblings/step-siblings will occur and is needed for growth and development.
- Establish clear family rules and consistent family routines.
- Spend time and give attention to all children equally.
- Acknowledge that each child is unique with varying needs, temperaments and personalities.
- Stay calm to help your children calm down themselves before discussing the conflict.
- Listen to your children and validate their feelings and needs while setting limits with harmful behavior.
- Help your children label, process, control and then communicate their feelings, needs and wants with each other.
- With school age children, use logical consequences that involves giving time to think of how to rectify the situation when conflict continues.

For More Information Please Visit - <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sibling-rivalry.html>