



Sibling Conflict: Opportunities to Learn

According to some research, young siblings fight an average of 3.5 times in an hour. This can be very frustrating to parents, but it may also be one of the most important opportunities parents have to support their children's social and emotional development.

Here are a few tips and ideas to think about when managing sibling conflict:

Let Them Argue:

- Try not to step in so quickly. As hard as it is, it's important to let siblings try and navigate conflicts on their own. This is one of their best opportunities to learn to negotiate, take turns, and cooperate in relationships throughout their lives.



Be Intentional and Calm:

- When you need to manage a sibling dispute, if there is time, take a moment to check in with how you are feeling, see if there is a need to clear your head, to calm down, develop a plan.

Be Fair and Avoid Blame:

- Siblings are naturally in competition with one another, conflict can be an opportunity for children to know that they are equally loved and equally valued by their parents.

Praise:

- When you have opportunity, wait and listen for how your children resolve a conflict, praise them for the resolution. Let them know that they should be proud of how they worked together.



References: Bronson, Po. (2009, Aug. 31). *The New Science of Siblings*. ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Parenting/story?id=8449624>; Hurley, Katie. PBS for Parents. (2018, May 22). *How to Foster Positive Sibling Relationships*. <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-foster-positive-sibling-relationships>.