



# Sibling Rivalry and Jealousy

*Everyone wants their children to get along, but often they don't! Hearing and watching your children fight with each other can be upsetting and frustrating.*

## Is it normal for brothers and sisters to fight?

- Children go through phases as they grow up which may cause conflicts: toddlers protect their things and often won't share; school-age children feel strongly about parents "being fair"; teenagers want to be independent and may resent having to help out or be with family.
- Competition for your attention and affection is normal and natural. Be sensitive when one of your children needs some extra attention.
- Children have different personalities and temperaments– and may get along better with some siblings than others.

## What can I do when they're fighting?

- Avoid getting involved. Encourage them to work it out. But stay close enough to prevent physical conflicts. Separate them until they're calm.
- Teach them how to compromise and work out a "win win" situation. For example, help them come up with a plan for sharing something instead of fighting.

## How can I prevent sibling rivalry and jealousy?

- Be a good role model! How parents treat others and react to conflict shows children how to get along with others.
- It's natural to compare your children, but try not to do this in front of them. Show that you love each child for who he/she is.
- Spend some time alone with each child as often as you can.
- Make sure each child has some space of their own and time to play with friends.
- Set ground rules for acceptable behavior with input from your kids. If there are frequent fights, have family meetings to go over the rules.
- Have fun together as a family - play games, take a walk, watch a movie. Build some memories of pleasant time together.
- Teach them how to compromise and work out a "win win" situation. For example, help them come up with a plan for sharing something instead of fighting.



If you have questions or concerns about how your children are getting along, talk to their health care provider. In some cases, professional counseling may be needed.



For more Fact Sheets please go to [www.ParentHelpNH.org](http://www.ParentHelpNH.org)

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