

Hang on! Help is on the way. Try these super strategies for making family life easier.

Katy Family Gram

How to stop the squabbling among brothers and sisters

Written by Katy Magazine's Editors



Although some siblings just connect better than others, all Katy parents can expect at least a little bit of fighting and bickering once in awhile. Here are some tips from the parenting pros to help you keep harmony in the family.

SET THE GROUND RULES Make sure your children know that hitting, name-calling, and teasing are off limits and what the consequences will be for breaking the rules.

TABLE TIME When arguing ensues, have kids sit at the table for a calm discussion with each other until they can figure out a resolution. Remind children to listen without interrupting, and to use their "I messages." "I was sad when you wouldn't let me play with you."

DON'T TAKE SIDES Guide kids into working it out without making one feel like the winner and one feel like the loser. "Ava, it looks like you were very sad when Scott knocked down your Lego castle, huh? Tell him how that made you feel."

THREE COMPLIMENTS For every mean thing a child says to the other, require them to come up with three compliments about their sibling. You'll be amazed at how this softens the heartstrings.

HEAD IT OFF AT THE PASS Forewarn the kids in advance that if they fight, both of them are going to bed 30 minutes early or will be skipping dessert. Then enforce the consequence if fighting begins anyway.

FIND COMMON GROUND Giving the kids a common goal or fun project is a great way to get them working together on something positive instead of fussing at each other. For example: baking cookies, bathing the dog, or washing the car.

QUIET TIME Sometimes kids just need to have separate spaces for some good old-fashioned downtime. Let them know that playing together is a privilege and if they abuse it, they have to be separated. Let them miss each other once in a while.

MODEL GOOD BEHAVIOR It's next to impossible to prevent your kids from screaming and name-calling if that's how you communicate. Children learn what they live, so establish an example of peace and calm in the home.

ENLIST THE CHILD'S HELP Explain to your older child that you need his help in guiding the younger child. Remind him he is a leader in the family and gets to help you teach the younger ones through example. Teach him some basic conflict resolution techniques and how to step out of the conflict for some alone time when necessary.

ONE-ON-ONE TIME Try to spend quality one-on-one time with each child where you can discuss frustrations, solutions, and just make them feel loved and heard.

NOTICE THE GOOD When you see your children playing well together or working out a situation without your involvement, point it out to them and give them kudos!

ALL IN THE FAMILY Routinely talk to your children at dinner or in the car about how you are a family unit and how you all love, respect, and would never want to hurt each other. Soon they will be saying these words too. Teach them the words, "family first." **KM**

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