

Siblings - National Families Week

Sibling fights... they're normal!

The most important thing to remember is that sibling fights are completely normal. However, it is good for children to learn about healthy conflict resolution, and the art of compromise.

There will almost always be elements of rivalry between siblings – it's a survival instinct and we all want to be assured that we are special, loved and wanted. The ultimate goal is for kids to use play to work out their disagreements, rather than through conflict or fighting.

Remember to set a good example by demonstrating good conflict resolution and a respectful way of settling disagreements yourself. If you get angry, so will they, so don't just say, **SHOW** the way!

Below are some tips to help manage sibling conflict.

- Give kids the opportunity to play with others.
- Step in to help if they don't seem able to work out disagreements.
- Debrief and discuss solutions that can be used next time – look out for triggers or situations that normally start conflict.
- Help them find ways to express feelings and label emotions when you see them.
- Divert their attention when they are ready to blow... put on music and dance it away!
- Routines are essential and make it easier to handle disagreements.





Look after each child's needs

- a. Spend regular quality time with each child even if its 10 minutes a day.
- b. Give each child lots of hugs and tell them you love them, **REGULARLY**.
- c. Don't compare siblings.
- d. Remember, while siblings must learn to share, they also need some space to call their own.

Have clear family rules

- e. However, try to ensure there aren't too many and keep them simple.
- f. Focus on what you want the children to do, **NOT** what they shouldn't do.
- g. Involve children in rule making.
- h. Write the family rules down and hang a copy where everyone can see them.
- i. Always follow through if the rules are broken with an agreed consequence



As we journey through these challenging times, please reach out for support. You can call Relationships Australia WA on 1300 364 277 or visit www.relationshipswa.org.au

4families - If you live in Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Cockburn, Kwinana, Mandurah, Manjimup, Margaret River or Rockingham you can get free support through our 4families service.

4Dads - The 4Dads program offers information, education, referrals and support for fathers of children up to 18 years in the Mandurah and Pinjarra areas.

Education - Our professional facilitators offer a range of courses to help you address parenting challenges.

Counselling - We provide counselling for families, including group and individual sessions. Our counsellors are experienced and skilled in dealing with family relationship challenges and can help support families to assess their needs, identify areas for change, better understand and relate to each other, restore trust and communication and to ultimately strengthen relationships within the family unit.