

Sibling rivalry is driving me insane!

Parenting ideas Page

Rivalry or competition between brothers and sisters is common but it can make family life intolerable for parents. Sibling rivalry is shown through constant fighting, criticising and telling tales.

Children who are close in age or adjacent in birth order are often rivals who compete for parental recognition.

Competitive siblings generally display different personalities and excel in different areas. If one child is responsible then a rival may be irresponsible. If one child is academically strong then a rival may choose to excel in another area, such as sport or music.

Rivalry is often more intense between children in small families as there is less chance for a break from each other. Also some children are more prone to rivalry due to their competitive temperaments.

Excessive rivalry is often a sign of discouragement - children spend a great deal of time and energy showing that they can be better, or get more attention, than a sibling. As competitive children will often avoid an

area where a sibling is successful, rivalry places limits on their potential.

Your acceptance of your children's differences will determine the degree of competitiveness. When you recognise and value your children's differences in personality, interests and achievement you will reduce the need for them to compete.

It is also useful to emphasise children's effort, improvement and enjoyment in activities rather than praise them for good results as excessive praise promotes rivalry. Sibling comparison, which is extremely divisive, is another practice to avoid if you want to reduce competition between family members.



Quick Parenting Quiz

1. Boys are generally better at fine motor activities than girls when they begin school.

True or false

2. What percentage of women over the age of 35 give birth?

- a) 6 per cent
- b) 11 per cent
- c) 16 per cent
- d) 21 per cent

Answers: 1. false 2c)

Vitamins for parents

Three ways to reduce rivalry in your family:

1. **Focus on solutions when children have conflict – "Why don't you two try to...?"**
2. **Put them in the same boat when they misbehave – "You will all be able to use the playroom again when it is clean."**
3. **Engage in a family-oriented activity at least once a week.**

Bright idea



Let's all celebrate

When one child does something well or worthwhile then the whole family celebrates. When everyone shares in the recognition of individual achievements children begin to think 'we' rather than 'me'.

Wise & Witty Words

"Lucy is a (tantrum) veteran. Not yet three, she has already held more street protests than the S11 movement."

Anonymous father

"The child that you want to raise as an upright and honourable person requires a lot more of your time than your money."

George Varky