

# Help! My Children's Fighting is Driving Me Crazy!

## SIBLING RIVALRY:

*You can't stop it, but you can make it easier on everyone.*

**I**t's normal for siblings to fight. Sharing space, belongings, and most importantly, parents, is bound to lead to conflict. With your help your children can learn how to solve conflicts peacefully. Below you'll find the tips you need to end the wars in your house.

• **Sibling rivalry is a normal part of your children's lives.** Bickering and arguing can be heard in every family with more than one child. Why?

Children may compete with each other for their parent's attention.

Brothers and sisters may have different personalities that don't always get along well together.

Boredom may lead to fighting because it gives a child something to do.

Children may feel frustrated and stressed from other parts of their life and take it out on a sibling.

Children may feel they're expected to share everything.

Children may feel "replaced" by a new baby.

Children may struggle with strong feelings of love and hate for one another.

• **So what's a parent to do?** First, look at ways you can stop sibling rivalry before it starts. Build these routines and practices into your everyday life.

Allow your child to express her feelings and let her know that they are important and real.

Make up a clear set of rules for behavior in the family. For example, no one can hit another person in this family.

Help your children learn to take turns when speaking.

Try to allow time once a week for each child to spend time alone with one parent doing something fun.

Involve your children in taking care of each other. An older child could hold a new baby or help a young child tie her shoes. A younger child could draw a picture to cheer up her sick sister.

• **Children learn the most from watching how their parents behave.** Pay attention to the way you relate to others. Listen and respond with respect.