

25 Ways to Address Sibling Rivalry

It's been around as long as there have been children, but what do you do when they're your children?

by [Dennis Rainey](#)

Conflict is common to all human relationships, especially siblings. What do you do when it's occurring in your home? Consider trying some of the following tips with your children:

1. Model honor and respect as you relate to one another in marriage.
2. Avoid four traps: favoritism, denial, discouragement, and loss of focus – enemies parents need to fight.
3. Train them to ask for forgiveness when they hurt one another.
4. Train them to grant forgiveness.
5. Listen to both sides before coming to a judgment.
6. Let natural consequences occur.
7. Give up trying to prove who is the guilty party.
8. Don't expect children to be conflict free.
9. Give children alternatives – work it out or you'll have a privilege of a chore.
10. Have game plan ready in advance for a conflict zone (i.e. car, especially on a trip).
11. Use the children's conflicts to teach them to identify their emotions and to help them label what they feel.
12. Never lose sight of the goal as a parent. You are training them for relationships, character, and who God is.
13. Realize there's a difference about how genders solve sibling rivalry; boys are physical and girls are more verbal.
14. Recognize three types of sibling rivalry: verbal, physical, and relational.
15. Use grade cards with babysitters to encourage accountability and good behavior.
16. Be careful when your children, especially daughters, enter junior high years when cliques begin to occur.
17. Tie the consequence to the conflict; for example, if they borrowed something without asking, ban them from borrowing something for the next 30 days.
18. Don't solve the problem for them; teach them to solve it themselves.
19. Pray that you'll catch them.
20. Use Scripture to develop a penalty system.
21. Dads, don't let children wear your wife down and confuse her.
22. Occasionally, ask them to write out their problems and what they are feeling to their brothers or sisters.
23. Use sibling rivalry to teach them that God is still in control.
24. Create situations where both parties can express what they are feeling.
25. Ignore most of it.