

When children have conflict: (From Siblings without Rivalry)



Imagine seeing child A take child B's toy from their hand.

Child B screams at A.

A starts to scream back

They are now both yelling at each other.

How do you feel when you think about this scenario? What do you see yourself doing?

According to Faber & Mazlish, when kids fight, we should:

- stay out of it
- Let them work it out themselves

because once you start interfering, they always want to involve you and if you always settle their arguments for them, they'll never learn to settle things themselves.

They discussed some possible reasons for kids to fight:

- Fighting over property (my toy is mine; your toy is also mine)
- Fighting over territory (stay out of my room / space)
- Fighting to see if the parent will favour one or the other
- Dealing with sexual feelings in a safe way (PS: I was surprised to read this but it made sense when I thought about it)
- They're mad at themselves and have no one else to let it out on
- Mad at someone else they can't take it out on so they let it out on their sibling
- Boredom
- Feeling powerful
- To get a reaction out of the parent

So - how should we react when the kids fight? And when do we intervene?

Faber & Mazlish have shared several lists of steps in the book to help us with this.

I've created some graphics to summarise those lists in the form of "cheat-sheets". Do also look at the cartoons for great examples of how helpful and unhelpful responses look like.

Additionally, the book addresses further questions that parents asked in the book which you may be wondering yourself:

- Aside from not forcing sharing, how else could you encourage it?
- What if one child is deliberately taking advantage of the younger one?
- How to discourage tattling?
- What do I do when they insist on involving me in their fight
- Can I tell my kids to settle their argument by tossing a coin / voting
- They can't seem to stop bickering - is there anything else we can do about it?
- How do I handle their fight for attention and recognition
- What do I do if one child continues to make life miserable for the others despite all my best efforts at following the steps?

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BOOK DISCUSSION

Chapter 6: When the Kids Fight - How to intervene helpfully

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Assignment:

Think back to when you usually intervene in a fight. Was intervention necessary at that point and why?



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SIBLINGS WITHOUT RIVALRY BOOK DISCUSSION

5-Step Response:

1 Acknowledge

Acknowledging the children's anger towards each other should help calm them

2 Listen

Listen to each child's side with respect.

3 Reflect

Describe the problem with respect.

4 Have Faith

Have faith & express confidence in their ability to work out a mutually agreeable solution

5 Leave

+ If they need additional help, casually offer simple suggestions before you leave

If they cannot stop, the parent can enforce a solution in a respectful manner, that keeps the children safe for now, but attend to collaboratively solving the problem later during a better time.

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SIBLINGS WITHOUT RIVALRY BOOK DISCUSSION

When the fighting is becoming dangerous

1 Describe

"I see that..."

2 Establish Limits

"This is a dangerous situation - we must have a cooling off period"

3 Separate them

"Quick you go to your room and you to yours."



Do it with conviction

- that you will not allow hurting - this is how you show care for them - by protecting them.

Check: Real fight or Play fight



Sometimes play fight can turn into a real fight - eg when one cries or gets overly aggressive. Play fighting has to be only by mutual consent where both are enjoying it.

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**SIBLINGS WITHOUT RIVALRY
BOOK DISCUSSION**

Levels of Fighting

Level I : Normal Bickering

1. Ignore it. Distract yourself with other thoughts.
2. Tell yourself the children are having an important experience in conflict resolution.

Level II : Situation heating up

Adult intervention might be helpful.
Engage 5-step response:

1. Acknowledge
2. Listen
3. Reflect
4. Have Faith / Express Confidence
5. Leave the room



Level III : Situation possibly dangerous

1. Check if it's a real fight or a play fight
2. Remind them play fighting is by mutual consent only. Otherwise it's got to stop.
3. Respect your feelings: "you may be playing but it's too rough for me. You need to find another activity."



Level IV : Situation definitely dangerous!

Adult intervention necessary.

1. Describe what you see
2. Establish limits
3. Separate them



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BOOK DISCUSSION**

Conflict Resolution

- 1 Call a meeting**
Call a meeting of the concerned parties and explain the purpose of the meeting.
- 2 Explain the ground rules**
We are calling this meeting because something is bothering (name). First we will hear from (name) with no interruptions. Then we will hear how you see things (second child name), and no one will interrupt you.
- 3 Write down and read back**
Write down each child's feelings and concerns. Read them aloud to both children to be sure you've understood them correctly.
- 4 Rebuttal**
Allow each child time for a rebuttal.
- 5 Suggest solutions**
Invite everyone to suggest as many solutions as possible without evaluating. Let the kids go first.
- 6 Decide on solution**
Decide upon the solution/s you can all live with.
- 7 Follow up**
Decide on a date and time to review if the solutions are working

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BOOK DISCUSSION**

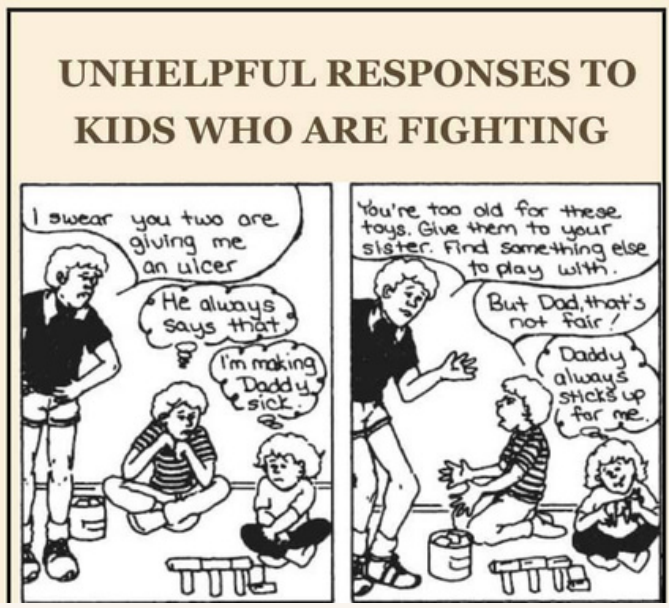
Giving support to a child without taking sides

-  1. State each child's case
-  2. State the value / rule
-  3. Leave room for negotiation
-  4. Leave

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HOW TO RESPOND HELPFULLY TO KIDS WHO ARE FIGHTING.



KIDS WORKING IT OUT.



WHEN THE FIGHTING IS HEADING TOWARD HURTING.



When children have conflict: (From Siblings without Rivalry)

A BATTLE OVER PROPERTY.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE PARENT HANDS DOWN THE FINAL DECISION.



WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A PARENT SUPPORTS ONE SIDE, BUT LEAVES THE FINAL DECISION UP TO CHILDREN.

