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Ten Ways to Keep your Kids From Fighting

By Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC

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Fighting among siblings is as natural as the changing of the seasons. All parents will have to deal with it. There are some simple things we can do to limit fighting and make it tolerable:

1. Ignore Their Fighting

Fighting is often a way for kids to get you to notice them. If you ignore their fighting (unless weapons are involved) there will be less incentive for them to do it.

2. Treat Your Kids the Same When it Comes to Fighting

If you get into who started things, you may be training your kids to be victims and bullies. Put them in the same boat and don't take sides.

3. Give your kids positive reinforcement when they are cooperating.

Let them know that they're doing a wonderful job when they get along. This one's easy to forget but vitally important. Give them attention when they're behaving the way you want.

4. Limit your own fighting and arguing.

Your kids will learn how to be peaceful from you. Don't expect them to do it well if you don't show them how.

5. Create an environment of cooperation.

Do projects together as a family that involve cooperation. Talk about how important it is for the family to cooperate. Avoid games or activities that promote fighting in your kids.

6. Train your kids in peacemaking when they're away from conflict.

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Talk to your kids about fighting at a time when they're relaxed and open. Ask them about what other options they might have taken rather than to hit their sister. Help them to brainstorm better solutions.

7. Avoid punishing your kids in general.

Punishing kids usually just creates angry kids who are more likely to fight. Do your best to give choices and give time outs. Punishment may bring short term solutions but will also bring long term problems.

8. Control how you react to their fighting.

When you must intervene, make sure you stay calm. If you're angry and shaming, you actually make it more likely that fighting will occur again.

9. Limit the number of fighting opportunities you give your kids.

Think about what has the potential to start fights. Don't buy a red ball and a blue ball, this may result in a fight by your kids. Buy two red balls—no fight. Don't have them close to each other when they're tired and hungry if you can help it.

10. Love your kids for all they're worth

Every day tell them you love them and more importantly, show them. Kids who feel loved are the least likely to fight. This won't eliminate it, but the alternative isn't pretty at all.

Mark Brandenburg MA, CPCC, is the author of *25 Secrets of Emotionally Intelligent Fathers* (http://www.markbrandenburg.com/e_book.htm#secrets). For more great tips and action steps for fathers, sign up for his FREE bi-weekly newsletter, *Dads, Don't Fix Your Kids*, at <http://www.markbrandenburg.com>

Parents As Role Models

By Kadence Buchanan

While television and other media have made it a practice to anoint well-known celebrities as positive role models for kids, the great majority of people still believe that parents should be the foremost role models of their children. The following is a compilation of various ways that can help parents become better role models for their kids.

In terms of nurturing children, the most common comment is to show your love and concern. Tell them you love them every day and show affection daily through hugs, kisses and touches. In spite of busy schedules, make time for special family fun activities. Also make the effort to meet your child's friends to build stronger rapport with them and to gauge the influence they exert on your kids.

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Understanding is another key in becoming an effective role model for your child.

As the saying goes, "Understand – don't take a stand." Communication is vital and should always be a two-way street. Listen to your kids and find out what's going on in their lives and if anything is bothering them. Let them know that they can talk to you about anything under the sun. It is important to remember that children who have good communication with their parents are more likely to ask for their advice than turn to their peers.

Parents constantly demand respect from their children, but remember that it is not something that can be taken for granted. Like most things of real value, respect has to be earned. And oftentimes, the best way to earn respect is to give respect. This also means that you have to learn to empathize, to put yourself in your kid's shoes and understand what it means to be him. And always try to avoid putting your children in situations where they feel disregarded, disrespected, humiliated or embarrassed. Such situations can sometimes leave deep emotional scars.

Remember that you have to teach your children to respect themselves as well. Teach them to stand up for themselves without putting their safety at risk. Discuss ways to solve problems without fighting. Make them aware that fighting never solves a problem. Most importantly, advise them that physical force or intimidation does not win respect, rather, it is the quality of one's character that wins respect.

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