

PROMOTING POSITIVE SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

Practical Tips for Caregivers



1 **Treat children fairly, without favoritism.** Value each child for who they are.

2 **Resist comparing or labeling children.** Labels like “the funny one” or “the smart one” seem harmless but can cause resentment and influence how children think about themselves.

3 **Encourage and praise positive sibling interactions.** Help children identify what they like about their siblings and encourage connections and shared interests between them.

4 **Help children to identify and express their feelings.** Teach children to pause and then name and communicate their feelings to practice coping and emotion management skills.

5 **Establish a family “no hitting” rule.** No adult or child should hit anyone else in the family. Insults, threats, and any form of physical hurting should also be off-limits.

6 **Teach constructive conflict resolution.** Don’t take sides or solve the conflict for them. Coach children to work together to identify the problem causing the conflict, see differing feelings and perspectives, and propose and enact solutions.

7 **Model good management of your emotions when interacting with others, including your children.** Take a breath before reacting.

8 **Model constructive conflict with others.** Be an example of a respectful and solution-focused person during conflict. Don’t focus exclusively on the harm done. Figure out how to move forward.

9 **Teach children body autonomy.** Children who feel in control of their own bodies, know the correct names for all body parts, and respect others’ body boundaries are safer children.

10 **Know when to seek help and education.** Sibling conflict and rivalry shouldn’t leave physical or emotional injuries. Pediatricians, guidance counselors, school nurses, and family resource centers can offer advice and resources.

SAARA is an initiative that aims to prevent sibling aggression and abuse.

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