

Why Sibling Rivalry is Good for Kids

Do your kids love to hate each other? Do they do their best bickering before 9 am? Indeed, for some siblings, arguing comes as naturally as breathing. The upside of all of this [anger in children](#) is that as brothers and sisters work through disagreements, they master all kinds of skills that can serve them well throughout their lifetimes and in most close relationships. Sibling rivalry at its finest includes lessons in:

I watch my kids negotiate while trading Littlest Pet Shop animals. I see them barter over chores. When picking up the playroom together, I overhear delegation and division of labor. And determining who gets to watch which TV show is the most delicate act of negotiation and compromise I have seen outside of international peace accords. As siblings navigate daily issues and conflicts, they gain invaluable skills. I have no doubt that there is direct translation between conflict-resolution skills developed in a kid's play room and deal-making skills exhibited in a company's board room. At least that's how I re-assure myself.

It takes a lot to keep your cool consistently when a sibling is always in your space and frequently at odds with your desires. Brothers and sisters who face this challenge and successfully learn to control their angry urges towards one another become adults who know the fine art of self-control. Kids who replace aggressive impulses with assertive messages develop emotionally intelligent communication skills.

Do you ever overhear your kids talking long after "lights out?" At first, you assume they are playing, but then you realize that they are solving the world's problems (or at least their world's problems) from the safety of a shared bed and with the support of each other. Kids who consistently hone their listening skills during those late-night chats benefit from an adolescence worth of empathizing and understanding another person's perspective.

Whether in times of war or periods of peace, there is one thing sibling relationships have in common: Siblings can be each others' very best teachers. From lessons about listening and empathy to skills of negotiation and conflict resolution, kids teach each other what is most important in life — the power of unconditional love.

Signe Whitson is a child and adolescent therapist, mom of two daughters, and author of [How to Be Angry: An Assertive Anger Expression Group Guide for Kids and Teens](#). Please visit her at www.signewhitson.com, Like her on [Facebook](#), or Follow her on Twitter [@SigneWhitson](#).

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