


Q We have three young children (3, 5 & 7). When they're together at home they seem to argue all the time. We intervene and it stops for a while, then starts up again. What can we do?

A The goal in dealing with sibling squabbles/rivalry should not be to rescue your children, but to help them learn to get along with each other. They have not yet developed the patience and coping skills to deal with their negative feelings in a positive way. You have to teach them.


- i Involve children in deciding what the consequences will be if someone breaks a rule. Be sure to follow through consistently.
- i Decide together on some measures to avoid conflict. For example, divide the play space or the toys, or agree to play next to each other but not with each other for a period of time.
- i Teach the kids the word "compromise" and help them think of ways they could do this before the conflict actually begins.
- i Let the children see the adults in the home work through conflicts peacefully. Remember, children learn by example.
- i When conflict develops, let the children work on it themselves within the rules they've developed. Be available to step in as a coach, not a referee, to remind them of their rules. 

Source: *Sibling Squabbles*, Dr. Martha Farrell Erickson



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Raising Great Kids



February

PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS

When children practice problem solving skills at home, they gain important life skills, including how to resolve their own conflicts. They learn how to identify their feelings and the feelings of others as well. They practice creative thinking (ideas for dealing with the problem).

Children also learn that there are many ways to solve problems, and when one solution doesn't work, they can go back and try again. Problem solving teaches children to consider the effect of their actions on others. These are all important skills for success at home, at school, in the neighborhood, and eventually, on the job. In addition, problem solving is essential to teach children for violence prevention.

Children are usually able to participate in simple problem solving by about age four. The process takes time, so try not to use it when you're in a hurry. **Caution!** Never use problem solving to replace setting limits, or in non-negotiable situations.



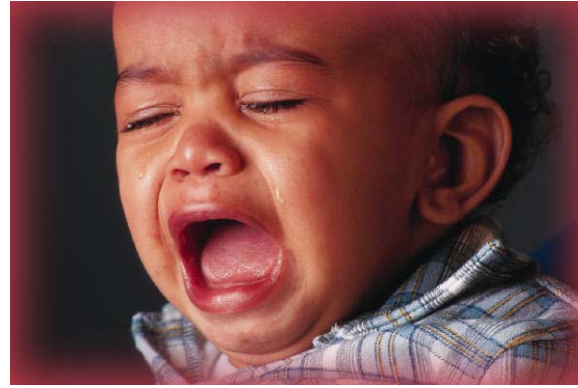
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PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS (CONTINUED)

Here are a few tips to help you teach your child problem solving.

- i Establish ground rules for problem solving.
- c treat each other with respect
- c avoid interrupting
- c try to find solutions, not blame
- c work to solve the problem



- i Acknowledge anger and allow time to cool off.
- i Stay focused on finding solutions, not on blaming.
- i Work with your child to gather information about the problem so that you can clearly state it. This means that you will have to respectfully listen to each other.
- i Brainstorm (think of) possible solutions without evaluating them. You may want to say something like: *"Let's think of ideas that could work in this situation."*
- i After you and your child have come up with a list of possible solutions, guide him in looking at each choice and it's possible consequence(s), e.g., *"What might happen if you...?"* The goal is to find a solution that is satisfactory to all concerned.
- i Decide on the most workable choice and put it into action. Evaluate the decision later to decide if it was successful.

When the solution is working well, remember to celebrate a *"problem solved!"* Problem solving is one of the most powerful skills you can teach your child. 🦋

Source: Teach Children to Problem Solve, Susan Beekman and Jeanne Holmes



Did you know you can increase your child's feeling of competency? Here's how:

- n Give him responsibilities appropriate to his age and ability.
- n Teach him self-care skills, e.g., dressing, helping to make his lunch.
- n Do not overprotect. When you overprotect you tell your child he can't be trusted.
- n Have him clean up his own mess as much as he possibly can.
- n If your child is experiencing a learning problem, work hard to resolve it and get him the help he needs to succeed. 🦋



The Palm Beach County number for Child Find is 1-561-434.8537.

Source: *Increasing Your Children's Feelings of Competency*, Family Information Services, Minneapolis, MN, 1999



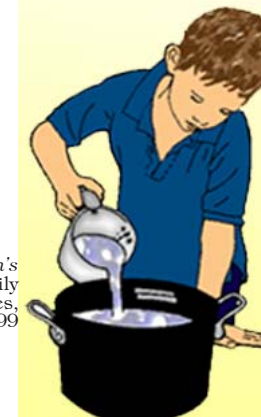
Sparkling Punch

- 1 can unsweetened apple juice concentrate
- 1 bottle club soda
- 3 cups water

Stir ingredients together in a pitcher. Add ice and enjoy!

Kids Can Help

Children can bring and measure the ingredients, add the ingredients to the pitcher and stir. 🦋



All children must be supervised when they are in the kitchen.