

Help Siblings Get Along With These Five Positive Parenting Tools

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Inside: Five Positive Tools for Helping Siblings Solve Conflicts and Get Along

The following is adapted from Rebecca's new book, *The Positive Parenting Workbook*. This inspiring and inviting guide walks readers through the process of charting a new path toward greater emotional awareness, clear communication, and joyful parenting! Filled with encouraging prompts and plenty of room to record your progress, this interactive workbook/journal is for anyone who wants to deepen their relationships with their loved ones.

Few things can ruin the peaceful and happy atmosphere of a home quicker than siblings who fight, tease, and disrespect each other.



Such behavior is not only frustrating for parents, but it turns what should be a “place of rest” for children into just another place to be on guard. There is much that can be done to foster healthy sibling relationships, and these are discussed in *The Positive Parenting Workbook* along with common parenting mistakes that actually fuel sibling rivalry. However, **even the most loving siblings will sometimes fight.**

When that occurs, having these positive discipline tools in your repertoire will help you handle the situation with kindness and firmness.

1. Time-in.

This is best for a young child who has aggression issues or high emotions. Bring the child into a calming space and give him tools such as books, crayons and paper, or a stress ball to squeeze so that he learns coping mechanisms for when he’s emotionally overwhelmed. Once he is rational again, discuss how better to handle anger.

2. Cool-off.

Now that my boys are older, aggression is rarely an issue, but I will send an aggressive child to his room or another area of the home to calm down. This isn’t the same as a time-out and isn’t a forced isolation, but rather a recommendation made with the knowledge that my son prefers to cool down alone. So, it’s not “go to your room and don’t come out until you can be nice!” but

rather “hey buddy, it looks like you could use some time to cool off in your room.” If your child prefers closeness and assistance to calm down, you’d, of course, offer that help as needed.

3. Peace table.

This is where the arguing children come together with your help to learn peaceful conflict resolution. Allow each child to state her case, ensure you understand the problem, and help them come to a resolution together. You may have to work through several times, but eventually the children will learn to do this on their own. One of best rewards was when my boys told me, “We’ve got this mom. We can work it out ourselves.” Yes!



4. Repair.

I always make sure that the boys repair their relationship after an argument. Whether they choose to give a verbal apology, write a note card, or make a small gift, I strongly encourage them to apologize and right their wrongs. Because it’s true that a forced apology holds no weight, I focus on helping my child see the other’s point of view and often an apology naturally follows. If not, I say, “so what can you do to help your brother feel better again?”

5. Refer to your blueprint.

In The Positive Parenting Workbook, I show you how to create a family blueprint. It’s **a mission statement which can also serve as a code of conduct** you can refer to when problem behavior arises because it details the values and goals of the family unit. You can use your blueprint in this

situation. “In the family mission statement we all signed, we agreed that kindness was our big value. Did you act in a kind way? What could you have done differently?”