

Autumn 2015

A health & family focused digital magazine & community.

# greenchild

A young child with curly hair and blue eyes, wearing a white sweater with a cat design, holding a purple flower. The child is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a lush green field of tall grass.

*Celebrating*  
International  
Babywearing Week

Gentle Solutions  
**for Soothing Colic**

Inspired  
*Fall*  
*Dishes*



# Tips on Dealing With Sibling Rivalry

|by Julia Cook, MS

“Give it back!”

“**Stop that!**”

“He won’t share!”

“**I had it first!**”

“She kicked me!”

“**That’s not fair!**”

**Sound familiar?** Oh, when your kids just can’t seem to get along...GRRRRRR!

I vividly remember fighting with my older sister over the front seat, the last pudding cup, and what show we were going to watch on TV. She always felt it was her job to tell me what to do, what to say, and especially how to act, so I made it my mission in life to find every way possible to embarrass her in front of everyone! The only thing we shared was genetics. I’m pretty sure she hated me most of the time...and I didn’t care much for her either.

Fast-forward 45 years, and hate is the farthest thing that we have between us. My big sister is the only person on the planet who grew up in the same world as I did. Although we are polar opposites in many ways, the bond we share is immeasurable. Friends have come and gone throughout our lives, but my sister has been a constant, offering unconditional support, understanding and acceptance. I know that she is forever in my corner, and I am in hers.

Sibling rivalry can be frustrating and upsetting to watch. A household full of conflict is stressful for everyone. Siblings fight for various reasons including ever-changing personal needs, varying temperament differences, and poor role modeling of conflict resolution.

On the flip side however, sibling rivalry does offer kids problem-solving practice for life. Thanks to my big sister...I consider myself an expert in this area!

**Here are a few tips that might be helpful the next time a war at your house breaks out:**

- **Make each child feel uniquely appreciated and validated.** People have three basic emotional needs: See Me, Hear Me, and Validate Me. When a child feels that one or more of these needs are not being met, they will do whatever it takes to fulfill them.
- **Explain to your children that fair doesn't always mean equal.** Your children are not the same and their needs are ever changing. Often, a parent needs to spend more time with one child than another. Privileges allotted are different and ever changing as well. Remember, situations are unique to each child, and each child will have a

different definition of "quality time."

- **Promote sensitivity and empathy.** Often understanding where another sibling is coming from helps reduce the occurrence and severity of sibling rivalry.
- **Don't be the judge or the jury.** Whenever possible, try to let your children work out their own differences. If you get involved, you risk creating other problems. Your children might start expecting you to rescue them rather than learning how to work out problems on their own. You may also be perceived as being one child's "protector" which can build up sibling resentment. Also, one child might start thinking that he/she can get away with more because he/she is always being saved by you. Always step in if there is danger of physical harm.
- **Remember... All successful human relationships must have two things: trust and communication.** If one or both are missing, the relationship will fail. Build trust and communication by holding family meetings, fostering team spirit, capitalizing on humor, letting the little things slide, and minimizing comparisons.

"Siblings are a priceless gift, but you must endure time to open it up."

Today my sister and I have much more in common than just genetics. We may share differing views of life's memories, but the bond that has grown between us will never be broken.