

Dear Children's Center Families and Staff,

On March 19th we had the privilege of having Stephanie Agnew of Parent's Place come to the Children's Center to share her expertise on Sibling Rivalry. It was an informative evening as parents were able to explore their own sibling experience, learn new parenting techniques, and discuss questions and concerns about parenting siblings. Stephanie provided the parents with many helpful handouts and if you are interested in receiving them, please feel free to email me or come see me in the Children's Center office. One of the handouts summarizes Stephanie's talk wonderfully:

Sibling Conflicts-Tips for Prevention and Intervention
(www.AboutOurKids.org)

Allow siblings to express their feelings about each other

- Don't dismiss or suppress children's resentment or angry feelings
- Children feel their parents understand them when their upset feelings are acknowledged
- Children need to know that although it's okay to become angry, this doesn't mean that they can behave in cruel and dangerous ways

Don't make comparisons

- Comparing siblings does not encourage better behavior
- Comparison intensifies jealousy and envy
- Each child should be given individual goals and expectations

Equal distribution

- If siblings frequently fight over the same things, develop a system for equal distribution (i.e. rotation system)

Treat children individually-not always equally

- Some parents believe that the best way to avoid arguments is to strive for equality among all children
- No matter how hard parents try to make things equal, children are bound to find something that's "unfair"
- Give to each child according to their individual need
- Rather than tell children that you love them equally, point out the special qualities that make them unique

Don't become involved in routine bickering or minor fighting

- Whenever possible let siblings work out their own differences
- The longer you stay out of a situation, the sooner they will learn to settle their differences themselves

Situations where parents are advised to step in:

- The amount of fighting seems excessive
- Same fight happens over and over without any resolution
- When conflict turns into real fighting in which one or both children may be hurt

Steps for dealing with conflict situations:

- Separate children until they are calm
- Listen to each child's point of view and acknowledge their feelings
- Encourage and guide children to suggest ideas for resolution
- Use opportunity to teach children basic conflict resolution skills

For further information on parenting siblings, consider reading "*Siblings without Rivalry*" by **Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish**. This book offers useful, practical ways to deal with sibling rivalry and improve your children's relationships. The book, as well as others, is available in the Family Resource Library, so feel free to come check it out!

Thanks to all who were able to attend this event!

Jenny Morgan

Program Coordinator

The Family Resource Center