

HOPE FOR THE FRAZZELED MOM

SURVIVING SIBLING RIVALRY: HANDLING POWER STRUGGLES BETWEEN CHILDREN



Contact Info

- Slides and links are available at
riverridgecounseling.com

Counseling Center phone: 503-668-5001

Dave's Cell: 503-803-0444



DUDE

I'm JOKING you are NOT adopted !!!

Power Struggles: three signs

1. Your Emotions can be an important clue that we are in a power struggle: Our anger
2. Results of your intervention also indicate if there is a power struggle: Does the child continue to do that same thing despite our intervention? Is the child defiant?
3. Third test of a power struggle is tone of voice.
 - When we **order** kids to do something we invite a power struggle.
 - Can we examine whether we have something at stake in the situation? Don't fool yourself into always thinking "I only have the good of the child in mind."

Level 1 - Normal Bickering: Passive intervention

- Ignore it.
 - ▣ Remember:
 - Behavior that gets noticed gets repeated.
 - Behavior that gets ignored ceases.
 - the benefits of child



I'm Mom's
Favorite

Level 2 - Heating Up: Adult Intervention Might Be Helpful

1. **Acknowledge** each child's anger.
2. **Listen** to each side with respect.
3. **Appreciate** the problem.
4. **Express** faith that they can work it out.
5. **Leave** the room.



Level 3 - Possible Danger: Adult steps in immediately

- Ask outright: Are you fighting or playing?
 - If you have already done a level 1 & 2 response, assume that it is fighting, but ask question as a discussion starter.
 - Help the children differentiate between fighting and playing.
 - If you are entering an already escalated/danger situation (and you haven't done a L1 & L2 response), consider context, the children (personalities, gender, ages), the level of inherent danger, etc. If they respond that it is “playing” and your assessment would allow for that, give guidelines then check back in five minutes.
- Set limits.
- Separate the children (Temporarily)



Persistent Sibling Rivalry

- “Levels 1-2-3” approach will solve 90%
- “Persistent Sibling Rivalry” tends to mean something else is going on
 - ▣ Parental stress/distraction
 - ▣ Couple friction
 - ▣ Problems in some domain of function: social, educational, physical
- Generally wise to access 3rd party help
 - ▣ Support for the child
 - ▣ Intervention into source of problem

In Conclusion . . .

- The family is the “laboratory” for maturity
- Conflict is normal to the human condition
- Comparison is a recipe for depression
- A little humor can go a long way
- Last (and most important)
 - ▣ If it is good for mom, it is good for the family

Discussion

- What has worked for you in the past to deal with sibling rivalry/power struggles in your home?
- What is one thing you heard today that you might try to implement?
- What “grade” would you give yourself for self care? What could you do to improve that grade one letter?