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Sibling Workshop with Dr. Laura Markham May 2025

Transcript of Chat

00:22:10 Heidi Whipple: We have two wonderful handouts as a part of this spotlight - How to Intervene in a Sibling Conflict

00:22:33 Heidi Whipple: How to Heal Sibling Resentment

00:23:51 Heidi Whipple: You can find all the free sibling articles on the website here: <https://www.peacefulparenthappykids.com/guide/helping-siblings-get-along>

00:24:55 Heidi Whipple: You have access to the Siblings week of the PPHK online course: <https://www.peacefulparenthappykids.com/pphk-course/week11-0ekkmrf6>

00:25:41 Heidi Whipple: You can find all the sibling resources for this spotlight here: <https://www.peacefulparenthappykids.com/members-v2-spotlight-topic/siblings>

00:27:32 Katarzyna Jakubiak: We take sides

00:27:33 Ania and Hussain Ali: Competing

00:27:41 Catherine A: labeling one child as easier and one child as more challenging, even if only to ourselves.

00:28:11 Naomi Greenway: my siblings hurt each other and it's so hard not to blame the other child.

00:28:49 Natalie Amorim: Showing exasperation when one child is acting out or being silly, then the others can take on that attitude

00:28:57 Heidi Whipple: not validating the child's conflicting emotions about their sibling

00:29:07 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "We take sides" with 👍

00:29:12 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Competing" with 👍

00:29:18 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "labeling one child a..." with 👍

00:29:21 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "my siblings hurt eac..." with 👍

00:29:26 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Showing exasperation..." with 👍

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- 00:30:16 Joanne Xie: Paying more attention to the one child who has a loud voice
- 00:30:25 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Paying more attentio..." with 👍
- 00:31:38 Marta Khader: In our house, I've noticed we try to make everything SUPER fair and even which backfires.
- 00:31:52 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "In our house, I've n..." with 👍
- 00:32:20 Dajana Yoakley: parents connection is easier with an easier child, and the more difficult child can feel that their connection isn't as easy. interpret that as favorite child vs. not favorite. based on temperament alignment of child and parent.
- 00:35:37 Cecilia Chen: Comment on fairness
- 00:35:43 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Comment on fairness" with 👍
- 00:40:52 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "parents connection i..." with 👍
- 00:42:35 Tianne Watson: I've been trying to set more limits on meanness, mean words, etc. but I still feel like they continue to use them. I don't fully understand how to follow through without consequences when it keeps happening.
- 00:44:21 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "I've been trying to ..."

I think it helps to put in more modeling. Sometimes I think of it as "translating" between siblings. "I hear you saying xyz..." and you restate in language that is not mean/attacking. Or you might talk to the sibling directly "Your brother is saying...(role model appropriate language)...is that correct, brother? Do you have anything to add?"

00:44:52 Dajana Yoakley: Replying to "I've been trying to ..."

This can be so frustrating. What's worked for my kids is when I pause when they are mean to each other, and I interrupt and say, "hold on, let's talk about this...how does it feel for you when he calls you that?" and then "What do you hear your brother say?" after empathizing with each child first. It's helpful for them to build empathy when they take a moment to listen to how the other child explains how it makes them feel when someone calls them a mean

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word. Allow them to see each other's vulnerabilities and sadness when their feelings are hurt.

00:45:11 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "This can be so frust..." with ❤️
00:45:42 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "I think it helps to ..." with ❤️
00:45:57 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "I've been trying to ..."

I love this language, Dajana. The child has to feel heard (by us) before they can express without attacking to their sibling.

00:46:53 Dajana Yoakley: Replying to "I've been trying to ..."

Yes, exactly, everyone needs to feel heard first and empathized with first, even if they're being mean. but then, it's their turn to listen to their siblings vulnerability to see their siblings humanity as well.

00:47:05 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Yes, exactly, everyo..." with ❤️
00:49:22 Cecilia Chen: Replying to "I've been trying to ..."

I'd like to comment that it's a very long term project to make this behavior disappear, so we just need to work on it over and over for many years, and in the meantime continue to build more connection and lessen their emotional baggage so that they don't get pushed to those super heightened state too often.

00:49:37 Disha Trivedi: Reacted to "I'd like to comment ..." with ❤️
00:49:41 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "I'd like to comment ..." with 👍
00:50:23 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "I'd like to comment ..." with ❤️
00:50:25 Disha Trivedi: Reacted to "This can be so frust..." with ❤️
00:50:46 Dajana Yoakley: Yes, for sure. The measure of success isn't necessarily that they stop being mean for good. Everyone can be mean when under stress or when feeling bad even if they are generally nice people. I think the measure of success is after you do a coaching session like this, do they seem to repair faster and enjoy each other's company soon after? Do they have MORE positive interactions as a result of your coaching?
00:52:12 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Yes, for sure. The m..." with 👍

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- 00:52:20 Cecilia Chen: Reacted to Yes, for sure. The m... with "👍"
- 01:01:58 Ania and Hussain Ali: That makes so much sense! The instinct is to teach them the right thing to do in these situations, but it comes off as lecturing, and the fired up one walks away
- 01:02:43 Eileen Fauver: Reacted to "That makes so much s..." with ❤️
- 01:03:07 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "That makes so much s..."

Yes, this takes a lot of practice for all of us! The beautiful part is that as we learn these skills, our children do also and makes so much difference in the long run. Imagine when they become adults!

- 01:03:14 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "That makes so much s..." with 👍
- 01:03:28 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "Yes, this takes a lo..." with ❤️
- 01:03:51 Marta Khader: Reacted to "I'd like to comment ..." with ❤️
- 01:05:13 Marta Khader: I love the word "important." You have something important to say to your sibling. That is so validating and really acknowledges the child's feelings and perspective.
- 01:05:25 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "I love the word "imp..." with 👍
- 01:06:05 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "I love the word "imp..." with ❤️
- 01:06:59 Heidi Whipple: Even imperfect attempts on our part make a difference!
- 01:07:03 Katarzyna Jakubiak: I think I'm good at validating my kids, but I can never get them to say these things to each other.
- 01:07:15 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "I think I'm good at ..." with 👍
- 01:07:20 Tianne Watson: Reacted to "I think I'm good at ..." with 👍
- 01:07:31 Lena kachouri: Reacted to I love the word "imp... with "❤️"
- 01:07:51 Marta Khader: Reacted to "Even imperfect attem..." with ❤️
- 01:11:45 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "I think I'm good at ..."

You've got the first part! One step at a time, and then we can add one more to work on. They have to feel deeply heard first, and then I think it takes a lot of role modeling of you talking to each one before they directly talk to each other. "I heard sister say...I heard brother say..." But you tell their position in a

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way that's describing and not attacking. With these extra sensitive neurodivergent kids, it's definitely a dance to figure out what works best to help them handle the conversation. Sometimes we have to revisit it after a break.

01:12:20 Katarzyna Jakubiak: Reacted to "You've got the first..." with 👍

01:14:11 Naomi Greenway: Replying to "I think I'm good at ..."

My 5 year old uses words like 'idiot' 'stupid' a lot since starting school. They are not words I want my son to be using but its constant I don't know how to get him to express himself with other words as I have tried so many times

01:14:38 Naomi Greenway: Replying to "I think I'm good at ..."

i have a 3 and 2 year old too so it is not language I want them listening to either

01:18:47 Terri Knutson: Invalidated feeling

01:19:42 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "I think I'm good at ..."

Naomi, this can be so anxiety-provoking when you don't want your younger children to hear these words. Underneath is a cry for help because your older child is struggling with his big emotions. When you are working on validating him first, I find it helpful to use phrases like "You wanted...that must have felt so awful...this is so hard." Really warm tone of voice and trying to see things from his point of view. He needs to feel connected and loved. Once you get to the step of describing what happened, that is starting to role play without attacking. If you can describe how he feels in a way that he feels heard, then that models to him how he can do the same.

01:25:43 Tianne Watson: What if the second kid isn't reacting at least in the moment, but the one keeps putting them down.

01:27:07 Cecilia Chen: My children asked this question -- Why were swearing words created? ... also the hurtful names and negative adjectives... It's actually not easy for me to form a good answer other than saying when

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people got super mad they said things to express strong feelings without realizing they hurt others

01:28:42 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "What if the second k..."

This can be tricky. One thing I've tried to do with my easier-going kid is to make sure and check in with him. "Do you have anything to say to your brother?" "How did that feel when your brother did xyz?" "What could you tell your brother when this happens?" It's easy to miss doing this, but the quieter child needs to grow these skills to stick up for themselves.

01:29:46 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "My children asked th..."

When people don't know how to handle their pain, they try to push it off onto others and hurt them so that they don't have to feel the pain themselves. So they do intend to hurt others, but it is because of their own great pain inside.

01:30:13 Jason Arenburg: Reacted to "When people don't kn..." with 👍

01:32:05 Jason Arenburg: Reacted to "My children asked th..." with ❤️

01:37:09 Naomi Greenway: Replying to "My children asked th..."

That's really helpful

01:37:36 Cecilia Chen: Reacted to When people don't kn... with 👍

01:38:43 Katarzyna Jakubiak: I have the same situation. My kids always insist they do not love each other, even though they do often get along very well and have a great time together.

01:39:11 Katarzyna Jakubiak: They just verbally won't acknowledge they love each other.

01:43:19 Dajana Yoakley: Replying to "They just verbally w..."

I wonder if you can make this a playful game when they're not fighting. Whatever you say, "let's play a game, you're not allowed to say love to each other". haha "you can say any word like blabbedyblababa but you can't say i love you, okay? ready set go!" and give them a chance to just giggle about it.

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Also, if it's not something they can say maybe you can encourage them to "write" it, instead of say it to start.

01:43:30 Tianne Watson: Replying to "They just verbally w..."

Yes it's so frustrating and makes me sad. Even though I have seen some progress with their relationship it's like they are afraid to acknowledge it.

Trying to remember it's a long game.

01:43:57 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "Yes it's so frustrat..." with 👍

01:44:07 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Yes it's so frustrat..." with 👍

01:45:38 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "They just verbally w..."

I think acknowledging caring for a sibling can be a very vulnerable thing, and siblings have many mixed emotions for each other so I can see how this is difficult for children to say. And at the same time, it can also be so painful for us as parents.

01:46:24 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "I think acknowledgin..." with 👍

01:46:33 Jason Arenburg: Reacted to "I think acknowledgin..." with ❤️

01:47:15 Tianne Watson: Dajana can you put the link to the sibling conflict cheat sheet you mentioned earlier. I like the idea of having printed and accessible. Thank you for the permission for it be imperfect and messy.

01:47:48 Heidi Whipple: Dajana was talking about this one, resolving sibling conflicts

01:47:56 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "Dajana can you put t..." with ❤️

01:48:05 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "Dajana was talking a..." with 👍

01:48:08 Ania and Hussain Ali: There's a common theme here, where we have this arsenal of conflict resolution, but our kids are not allowing us to use it 😞 is there a system we can introduce to encourage them to sit through our attempts to resolve their conflicts? I just need 2 mins of them listening to me

01:48:40 Dajana Yoakley: I also let my kids read these haha the conflict resolution one looks like a comic which my kids love! Why not let them read it out loud or alone?

01:48:50 Cecilia Chen: I have a question that not sure if we'll have time to get to ... about Dr. Laura's rewarding sibling conflicts resolution by putting a

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coin and then they decide how to use it later. I find it very tricky to implement -- do you announce it in advance or just do it secretly when one successful resolution happens? For what age range this might be helpful? Or is it used mostly as icing on the cake, or only when things go so bad that we need a little external reward to lower the fire from constant fights?

01:49:52 Tianne Watson: Thank you.

01:50:12 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "There's a common the..."

The printable Dr. Laura is showing right now on healing sibling resentment is a starting point. We may need to build up the connection with each child individually first by focusing on preventative maintenance. The better relationship each child has with us, the less sibling conflict there will be. It starts with connection. In a fight, you can start with talking with each child separately (maybe even a little later when things are more calm) first.

01:50:40 Heidi Whipple: Replying to "There's a common the..."

I want to acknowledge how hard this is! It is so hard when we try to intervene and things are so heated between siblings.

01:50:56 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "I want to acknowledg..." with ❤️

01:51:50 Dajana Yoakley: Sibling conflicts are a daily occurrence in MOST of our homes. You're not alone in this. If it feels hard, that's because IT IS hard! You don't have to be perfect. You just have to show up. Imperfectly.

01:52:06 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Sibling conflicts ar..." with ❤️

01:52:24 Tianne Watson: Thank you Dr. Laura and everyone. This has been so helpful and so grateful to have a group! Have to head out shortly. Grateful there will be a replay

01:52:32 Lena kachouri: Reacted to Sibling conflicts ar... with "❤️"

01:52:36 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "Thank you Dr. Laura ..." with ❤️

01:52:37 Heidi Whipple: Reacted to "Thank you Dr. Laura ..." with ❤️

01:53:03 Lena kachouri: Reacted to I want to acknowledg... with "❤️"

01:53:12 Lena kachouri: Reacted to Thank you Dr. Laura ... with "❤️"

01:54:02 Cecilia Chen: Reacted to I want to acknowledg... with "❤️"

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01:54:49 Heidi Whipple: Cecilia, I am unsure of the idea you are asking about. Do you mean flipping a coin to see who can talk first?

01:56:00 Naomi Greenway: I am going to have to go as I am sat in the car with my laptop and battery about to run out! How much longer will it be?

01:56:23 Dajana Yoakley: Replying to "I am going to have t..."

We are almost done. We usually go about 90 minutes.

01:56:43 Naomi Greenway: Replying to "I am going to have t..."

Ok thank you 😊 first time on here

01:56:47 Dajana Yoakley: Reacted to "Ok thank you 😊 firs..." with 👍

01:56:50 renata robel: Loved this session. My twins hate each other 😊

01:57:00 Ania and Hussain Ali: Reacted to "Loved this session. ..." with 😂

01:57:08 Naomi Greenway: Replying to "I am going to have t..."

Been amazing thank you

01:57:17 Dajana Yoakley: Replying to "Loved this session. ..."

Ah twins! Come to office hours and ask more questions if you have them! 😊

01:57:22 Katarzyna Jakubiak: Thank you!

01:57:29 Angie Taves: Thank you!! That was sooo helpful!!!!

01:57:32 Joanne Xie: Thank you so much 🙏🙏

01:57:39 Frances Wong: thank you!

01:57:41 Jason Arenburg: Thank you!

01:57:44 Heidi Crossley: Thanks!

01:57:58 Lesley Iwinski: Thank you all! ❤️