



# WPN News

September 2021



## Playgroup Schedule

### ★ Learn and Play Groups

Mon and Wed 9 - 10:30

Tues and Thurs 9:30 - 11

Children must be Winthrop residents and 18 months old as of September 1st.

### Contact Brynn Durkee at

brynnurkee@gmail.com



## WPN Website

Click on the link above to visit our website.



[WPN Facebook Page](#)



### ASQ Online screening for children birth - 5yrs

*Do you want to find out how your child is doing developmentally? Fill out this questionnaire and the coordinator (Anita Preble) will contact you about the results. The questionnaire includes questions about your child's communication, gross motor, fine motor, problem solving, and personal social skills. Click the image above for more information and to get started.*

# Coping with Sibling Rivalry<sup>1</sup>

*The Center for Parenting Education*

## Concerns About Sibling Rivalry

As long as there is more than one child in the house, sibling rivalry is inevitable. The bane of many parents' existence, sibling fighting often leaves Moms and Dads feeling exhausted and worn out by all the bickering and teasing, and wondering why their kids seem to fight so much.

They want to find out how they can promote a warm and close relationship between their offspring that will carry forward into their children's adulthood.

You may relate to some of the following reactions we have heard from parents about how they feel about their children squabbling: angry, furious, helpless, out of control, exasperated, hopeless, powerless, sad, confused, disappointed, frustrated, overwhelmed, agitated, and less frequently, amused.

### Parents worry that their children will:

- get physically or emotionally hurt,
- have their self-esteem damaged especially if the conflicts are chronic,
- become bullies,
- never stop fighting,
- have poor relationships as adults,
- lack empathy,
- not care for others.



### The different forms of sibling rivalry

Parents are often amazed at the different forms that sibling rivalry can take and how creative and mean children can be to their siblings. Here are just a few of the ways that children can provoke one another:

- name-calling,
- blaming,
- poking,
- stealing things,
- lying,

1. "Coping with Sibling Rivalry." *The Center for Parenting Education*, 2014, centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/sibling-rivalry/coping-sibling-rivalry/. Accessed 18 Sept. 2021.



## Need Help & Don't Know Where To Turn?

Every day, someone somewhere in Massachusetts needs to find essential community services, an after school program, a food bank, or where to secure care for an aging parent. Many face these challenges, but don't always know where to turn for help. The Solution is to Dial 2-1-1.

[Click here for more information.](#)

### *What is the Winthrop Parents Network?*

Winthrop Parents Network is funded through the [Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant \(CFCE\)](#), a grant from the Department of Early Education and Care. The primary purpose of this program is to promote early literacy, parenting education, developmental screenings, resources and referrals for families with children birth to age 8. This goal is achieved through collaboration with the public schools, private preschools, Early Intervention and other agencies that provide services to families.



MASSACHUSETTS  
Department of  
Early Education and Care

For information about resources, child care, etc..  
[click here.](#)

- challenging a belief,
- arguing,
- simply looking at each other,
- tattling,
- breaking something that belongs to the other one,
- hitting,
- throwing something at the other one,
- hiding something that is important to the other one.

Some of these tactics are probably agonizingly familiar to you, and you can probably come up with a few more ingenious ways that your children seem to torment one another!

To most parents, all the fighting seems so unnecessary, gets on their nerves, and can be upsetting because they don't like seeing their children hurt each other or be mean to one another. And many parents have added pressure because they feel like they have to resolve the problems like a wise old owl!

## The Benefits of Sibling Rivalry

Weary parents often wonder: Why do kids fight? It makes no sense to us adults!

Actually, it is interesting to think about the sibling fighting from your children's perspective.

### Why children fight

They may:

- get attention from you.
- feel powerful.
- get a break from boredom. Annoying a sibling may seem more exciting than anything else going on.
- connect with their sibling.
- get physical contact.
- become the 'favored one' in their parents' eyes by making their sibling look bad.

These are all things that children need, but fighting with a sibling is not the best way for them to achieve these goals; you can guide them to find more appropriate ways to get their needs met.

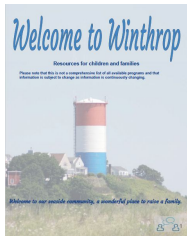
### What children learn from the fighting

In addition, children actually do learn important life skills through the arguing they do with their siblings.

They learn to:

- deal with power struggles.
- manage conflict and resolve differences.
- be assertive and to stand up for their position.
- negotiate and compromise.

# New to Winthrop?



Winthrop has so much to offer families! Check out our brochure that

Includes information on health, schools, activities, transportation, and more! Visit our website ([Click here](#)) or click on the image above to view.



## Factors that Influence Sibling Rivalry

Being aware of the factors that influence sibling rivalry can help you to be more understanding and help you to respond in more sensitive ways to the sibling issues that arise.

- birth order
- age difference
- Gender
- Family circumstances

Want to know more? Continue reading this article online by clicking here -

### Factors that Influence Sibling Rivalry

(<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/discipline/coping-sibling-rivalry/#factors>)

## Parents' Expectations vs. the Reality

Even with these positive outcomes that can result from siblings fighting, often the seemingly unending nature of the arguing can make a parent wonder: "Why do so many people have more than one child?" (and more specifically, "Why did I have more than one child?")

### Parents typically imagine their children would:

- be loving,
- not fight,
- be fair to each other,
- share and want to play nicely with each other,
- not seem to enjoy hurting each other,
- work together with kindness and consideration when they have conflicts,
- not want to annoy their parents,
- not try to kill each other if left alone with each other.

You may have had other positive images of your children's relationship before you ever had the kids. Sometimes, these positive things do happen, and it can warm your heart to see your children be loving and kind to one another.

But other times, you can despair that they will ever get along or even like each other.

**When your expectations do not match the reality, you may feel a sense of loss as you give up the image you had** of your children being warm and loving to each other all the time.

Even though you might feel sad about this reality, it is best to give up the fantasized image and accept that fighting and rivalry come with the turf of having more than one child.

By accepting the fact that siblings will fight, and there will be times when they seem to do everything they can to hurt one another, you will not think that you must be doing something wrong, or that something is wrong with your children.

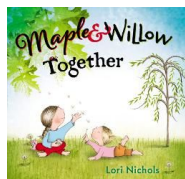
**Once you come to terms with this inevitability, you will be in a stronger position to come up with plans for managing the fighting.**

### How your parents handled sibling rivalry

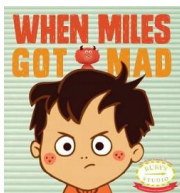
Another point to remember: **How you handle your own children's conflicts can be influenced by how your parents dealt with rivalry between you and your siblings.** Did you ever hear any of these comments from your parents when you were growing up

- "Just stop fighting; I can't take it anymore."
- "Don't bother me with your silly fights; just work it out yourselves."
- "I don't care who started it; you'll both be punished."
- "Why can't you just be nice to one another?"
- "If you don't stop fighting, I will tell your father/mother."

## Books to read with your child about sibling rivalry. 2



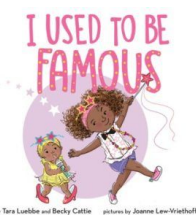
**Maple and Willow Together**  
by Lori Nichols



**When Miles Got Mad**  
by Samantha Kurtzman-Co unter and Abbie Schiller



**Kindness Grows**  
by Britta Teckentrup



**I Used To Be Famous**  
by Tara Luebbe and Becky Cattie



**That's My Blanket, Baby!**  
by Angie Morgan

For a complete list of books, visit Library Mom's website:  
<https://librarymom.com/best-books-for-sibling-rivalry/>

Sometimes you may find yourself responding to your children in the same way that your parents responded to you. This may be because you don't realize you are doing it, or you don't know how else to respond.

But when you consciously think about which responses your parents used that were effective and which were not, you can find alternative and better ways to cope with sibling rivalry with your children.

### Insights from "images vs. reality"

- **Remember that sibling rivalry is inevitable to some degree.**

It does not mean that there is something wrong with your children or with the way you are parenting.

- **Children gain some benefits from the fighting.**

Even though it seems so pointless to you, the fighting and bickering do offer your children opportunities to learn life skills.

- **Let go of the idea that you can eliminate sibling rivalry.**

You will be in a stronger position to manage the fighting and bickering when you give up any images of a totally harmonious relationship between your children.

- **Be aware of how your parents handled rivalry between you and your siblings.**

This can help you to discard those approaches that you now see were not helpful and to be more intentional in using those approaches which you see were effective.

In next month's issue we will continue the discussion with strategies on how to manage sibling rivalry. Don't want to wait? Click here - [Strategies to Manage the Mania](#)



## Create a Kindness Jar!

Decorate a jar with your children and explain that everytime they do something kind for their sibling they can put a pom pom (or bead, penny, etc) in it. When it is full you can all do something special.

- Fill a baby jar with popcorn seeds and have a popcorn party!
- Fill a jar with beads and make friendship bracelets.
- Fill a jar with pennies and buy something special.