Inn Farm Private Day Nursery



Sibling Rivalry

Children generally enjoy the company of other children unless the other child in question happens to be their sibling! Whilst not all siblings fight, it is very rare that there is never a conflict and many different things can cause siblings to fight. Most brothers and sisters experience a degree of jealously or competition and this can cause bickering and falling out. Other factors that can cause conflict are their differing evolving needs. Toddlers are naturally protective of their toys so if a baby crawls over to pick something up the older child may act aggressively. School aged children have a strong sense of what’s fair and cannot understand why siblings of other ages are treated differently, hence the frequent wail in most households of “That’s not fair!” Individual temperaments and personalities also play a large part into how well your children get along with each other as does the way in which you as a parent resolve conflicts within the household. If you and your partner work through conflicts in a way that is respectful, productive and not aggressive, you increase the chances of your children doing the same. However if they see you shouting, making snide comments and stropping off then this is the bad habits that they will probably copy.

So, what to do when the fighting starts? Where possible do not get involved unless there is a danger of physical harm. If you always intervene, you risk creating other problems, such as they start expecting your intervention and begin to use fighting as a way to gain attention. If you are concerned by the language used or name calling then you can “coach” them through what they are feeling by using appropriate words. This is different from intervening as it is helping them to resolve their conflicts themselves. If you do need to step in then don’t put too much focus on who is to blame, as it takes two to fight so both are equally responsible. If needs be, separate them until they are calm and if they are in the back of the car I tell mine that they must look out of their own windows until they have spotted 10 red cars and then they can look forwards again. (Don’t choose silver cars as there are thousands of them on the road!)

Encourage harmony in the family by having fun together. Movie nights go down a storm in our household but you can enjoy things like a games night or a treasure hunt in the local park or woods. If you establish a peaceful way for your children to spend time together this can help them relate to each other and can help ease tensions between them therefore creating a happy home and not a war zone!

Remember, as children cope with disputes, they are also learning important life skills, such as how to value another person’s perspective and how to negotiate and compromise. All skills needed in the playground of life!