

Usually kids fight less if adults:

- **Don't compare kids to one another - "If he can do it, so can you."** Comparison makes kids feel as they are competing and they are more likely to fight.
- **Ignore as much fighting as possible.** If you pay attention to fighting, kids learn they can hook you into their problems. Let them learn to solve their own problems.
- **Don't try to find out how a fight started or who started it** - "All right, who hit who first?" or "Well what did you do to her?". Each one will blame the other. If necessary, separate the fighters for a few minutes.
- **Let kids say their feelings** - "I hate my brother." "I feel like bashing him." "I wish he'd never been born."
These feelings are normal and will not go away because you say you don't want to hear them. Let kids know their feelings are OK - "I can tell you're really angry with him." - but hitting someone is not OK.
- **Praise kids and hug them when they cooperate with each other.** Praise them for solving their own problems.
- **Give kids permission to do something to get their angry feelings out** - hit a pillow, swing a stick at an old tire in the yard - in ways that won't harm anyone.
- **Set a good example.** Don't hit your children or anyone else when you're angry.
- **When kids are hitting each other, you can say,** "We don't hit; I'll give you one minute to solve the problem without hitting." or "You have a choice. You can stop fighting and keep playing the game or you can put the game away until you're ready to play without fighting." If this doesn't work, or if the fighting starts again, say "I can see you're still not ready." Take the game away saying, "Perhaps you'll be ready later." When they ask for the game back you may say, "I'm glad you're ready to play together now."

When Kids Fight

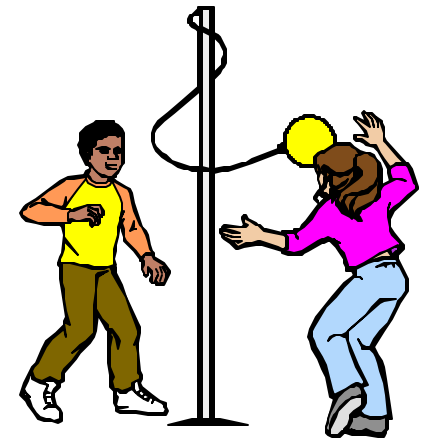
It's hard to listen to kids who fight. Parents feel frustrated, angry, and often helpless. They feel irritated because they have to decide when to ignore fighting - which is most of the time - and when to try to stop it - not often.



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Prevent Child Abuse Rhode Island is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to keep every child in Rhode Island safe from abuse and neglect through a primary prevention approach of education, advocacy and public awareness activities.



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