



ELTERN POST

ISSUE
02/2026



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Der Kinderschutzbund
Landesverband Bayern



SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

How parents can support their children
and strengthen their relationship

Dear parents, guardians and families,

„They’re fighting again!“

Sibling rivalry is part of everyday family life. And it can be very exhausting.

But fighting isn’t always a bad thing.

Children learn to express their wishes, set boundaries, and find compromises. With good guidance, arguments can even strengthen relationships.

*Ihr Team des Kinderschutzbundes
Landesverband Bayern*



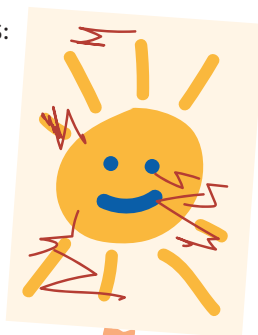
WHY SIBLINGS ARGUE

Siblings spend a lot of time together.
They share toys, rooms, and their parents' attention.
Every child has their own needs and ideas.
This leads to conflicts.
And conflicts are part of growing up.

HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT THEIR CHILDREN

1. Listen first, then act

Get down to their level.
Listen calmly to each child individually.
Summarize what you have heard and name their feelings:
“You’re sad because Karl drew on your picture?”



“And you wanted to play too and were disappointed because your sister wouldn’t let you?”

By listening, taking them seriously, and summarizing in this way, the children can often calm down.

2. Don't look for someone to blame

Don't try to figure out who started it.

The more important questions are: How are you feeling? What happened? And what should we do now?

Ask questions such as:

- “You both want the shovel. What can we do?”
- “What would be a solution that you can both live with?”

Children often have good ideas when we ask them.





3. Don't compare

Statements such as:

“Your brother does that much better” or “You are much more difficult than your sister” increase competition, hurt feelings, and stir up arguments among children.

Every child wants to be seen for who they are, without comparisons.

4. Every child need closeness

Some children often get into arguments. This is often driven by a strong desire for attention, security, or justice.

Treat every child with love, regardless of “who started it or who is to blame.” Punishment, withdrawal, or rejection usually exacerbate the conflict.

5. Consciously reinforce and praise social behavior

Pay attention when your children are considerate, helpful, or take turns.

Actively reinforce:

“Please take turns with the Bobby Car.”

“Please share the Lego bricks with each other.

Everyone gets half.”

Or praise:

“That was nice of you to wait.”

“Look how happy your brother is.”

This is how you strengthen cooperation and social skills.

6. Time for each child

Every child also needs time alone with a parent.

This “exclusive time” provides security and prevents competition.

This could be, for example, “five minutes in bed in the evening” or “ten minutes when their brother is at training.”

It's quality that counts here, not quantity.





GUIDE ARGUMENTS INSTEAD OF FORBIDDEN THEM

Arguments are acceptable, but without hurtful words.

Agree on simple rules.

No insults.

No hitting.

Small rituals can be helpful, for example:

- A “talking stone” or cuddly toy: whoever holds it in their hand is allowed to speak
- Crumpling up paper or squeezing pillows to let off steam

It is important that children learn to resolve conflicts themselves.



TAKE FEELINGS SERIOUSLY

Don't just address the issue.

Pay attention to feelings.

“You feel you’ve been treated unfairly.”

“You were angry because you wanted a turn too.”

Understanding feelings does not mean agreeing with every behavior.

But it helps children remain open to solutions.



MODERATE INSTEAD OF LEAVING THEM ALONE

You are impartial!

Ask both children one after the other:

Tell me. What did you actually want?

What would you have liked the other person to do?

What could you do next time?

What shall we do now?

This way, children can learn how to argue well so that everyone can win.



IN CONCLUSION

Sibling rivalry is normal.

It is part of growing up.

We don't have to prevent every conflict.

We can accompany our children, intervene when necessary, and trust them to find solutions.

In this way, step by step, a strong sibling relationship can grow out of conflict.

HILFSANGEBOTE

Buchempfehlung:

- Geschwister...haben sich zum Streiten gern
→ *Endres Wolfgang*
- Geschwister - Liebe und Rivalität
→ *Petri Horst*
- Kleine Geschwister - Geschichten zum Vorlesen
→ *Nahrgang Frauke und Schulte Susanne*
- Klar, dass Mama Anna lieber hat
→ *Boie Kirsten und Brix Silke*
- Blöde Ziege, Dumme Gans
→ *Abedi Isabel und Neuendorf Silvio*



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- Step-Beratungstelefon → 0211 81 97 10 81
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- bke-Elternberatung (online)
→ <https://eltern.bke-beratung.de/views/home/index.html>
- Starke Eltern - Starke Kinder-Elternkurse
→ <https://sesk.de/kurs-suche/>
- Familienpat*innen
→ <https://www.familienpaten-bayern.de/informationeninteressierte-fampa-bayern/fuer-familien-fampa-bayern.html>



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Dieser Elternbrief wurde im Rahmen des Projekts
"Interkulturelle Elternbildung" entwickelt.



Gefördert durch

Bayerisches Staatsministerium des
Innern, für Sport und Integration