

STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

# Sibling Rivalry

**Start with a story:** There are times when Sarah does not like it when her sister, Marcy, uses her toys without asking for a turn. Sometimes their games end in tears. “Marcy took my toy,” Sarah cries. “It’s mine!” shouts Marcy.

**Talk about it:** Ask each child, “Has sharing ever been hard for you? What helped make it easier?”



## Strategies for helping children work through sibling rivalry

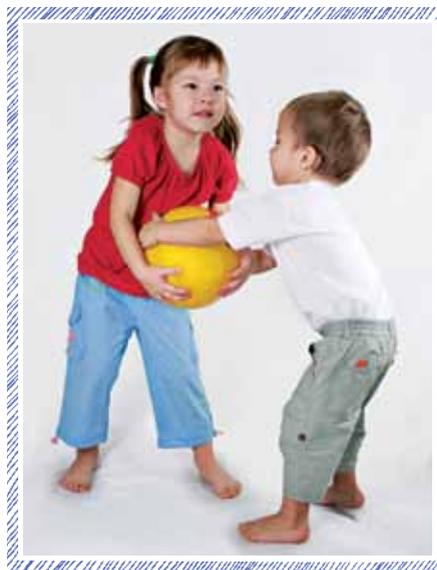
Helping siblings to practice patience and solve problems will help them to work through conflict and build an even stronger bond.

### If your children have trouble sharing, try these strategies:

- Help each child to manage her feelings before she reacts. Try the “Breathe, Think, Do” strategy (see page 3).
- Encourage each child to actively work through a conflict. If one child says, “Maxine won’t let me use the markers,” you might say, “Have you tried asking her for the markers in a nice way?” If one of your children tries to tell her sibling to stop doing hurtful things and the sibling doesn’t listen, you should step in and insist that the mean behavior stop.
- Point out times that your child has successfully shared and ask her how it felt.
- After a conflict is resolved, talk together about how the situation can be handled in the future. You might ask, “What are some things we can do the next time this happens?”

### Recipe for Resilience

**Mine, yours, ours** Set up shelves or boxes where each of your children can place items that they do not wish to share. Then you can designate some items that are always for sharing.



**A child’s perspective:** Each sibling develops at her own pace. Older children might have a sense of how to cooperate and share, while younger children aren’t as good at taking turns. It can be very hard for an older child to accept that a younger sibling “just doesn’t know how yet.”