

# FACT SHEET:

**Category:**  
Life After ABI  
Parenting

**Audience:**  
Person with an ABI

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ABIOS Manager



# ABIOS

Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service



## Managing Sibling Rivalry

### Introduction

Sibling rivalry can happen when there is more than one child in the family. It may happen when children compete with each other for parental attention. Children will tease, squabble, tell on each other, and argue amongst themselves. Some of this is normal and teaches children how to get on with others. However, it can become disruptive in a family. It may need to be dealt with in a more helpful way. This tip sheet looks at how to prevent problems and how to manage it when all else fails.



### How do I know sibling rivalry is a problem?

Sibling rivalry is a problem when:

- The arguing between the children stops them from doing jobs, chores, and family activities
- Whenever the children are together there is fighting and arguing
- The fighting between the children gets to where they physically hurt each other
- Children tell you they dislike or resent a brother or sister

### Why are my children arguing?

Everyone's children argue at different times. Children argue, fight and yell for a variety of reasons including:

- When they do not have the language to solve the problem
- When they do not know other ways of solving the problem
- To see a reaction from others
- To get attention from their parents
- When they feel that something is not fair
- Out of jealousy or competition with their sibling



### How to help prevent problems with siblings

- Value and respect each child's individuality, needs and rights
- Encourage children to take an interest in each other's activities
- Make sure children feel accepted and worthwhile even when having difficulties

- Set a good example by sharing with your own children
- Use lots of praise when children are getting along with each other
- When you have the time to be involved, set the children up in a task where they have to share each others toys, games, and space. Praise sharing and cooperation.
- Be realistic about how long young children can play with each other
- Spend time with each child as well as all the children together
- When you need to complete a task set up your children in different activities to avoid having to stop your work and discipline
- Allow children time and space to sort out their own arguments. However, make sure that the argument is kept to a manageable level
- Encourage children to think about how other children feel

### How to manage sibling problems when you did not see what happened

- The 1-2-3 time-out is applied to ALL children involved
- It is done in the same way as with one child
- Do not attempt to find out who started it or what happened
- Don't have different rules for different aged children.
- Don't expect older children to act more responsibly.
- If behaviour is harmful simply say 'That's 3, time-out'
- Send them to different spaces
- If they fight or yell and scream on the way or during the time-out, add 5 minutes to the time out

### Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that in the development of the ABIOS Parenting fact sheets we have incorporated ideas from the 1-2-3 Magic Program and The Triple P program.

### Key Points

- Treat all children fairly and equally
- Practice sharing and cooperation in activities when you can play as well
- When you are completing a task, have the children doing different activities in different places. This avoids you being interrupted. Apply 1-2-3 time-out to all children involved
- If the behaviour is harmful simply say "That's 3, time-out" and send them to different places

### Resources

See other Acquired Brain Injury Outreach Service (ABIOS) Information sheets at <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/abios/>



### Notes:
