

WHAT TO DO

1 Teach negotiation and compromise

"I often leave my kids to sort it out by themselves and remove myself completely from the situation," Joanne says. But for this to work the kids must have learnt to self-manage, child counsellor Kirsten McLeod says.

One of the key ways to do this is to show your kids how to resolve disputes in a way that works for everyone.

For starters, get them to stop shouting and start communicating effectively once they have calmed down, she says.

Give each child a chance to voice their side of the story. "Let them speak from the heart and listen to each other."

Teach them that they need to learn to listen without being judgmental. Then clarify what the problem is and get them to come up with a solution that works for everyone.

If they don't come up with any ideas,

introduce a solution. For instance, if they're fighting over a new video game, propose creating a schedule that gives each child a set amount of time to play the game.

2 Enforce rules

Make sure your kids know the rules of the home – for example, no hitting, name-calling or damaging other people's property – and that they all abide by them. "This applies to parents as well," McLeod says.

When they follow the rules, praise them. "Clear and consistent boundaries not only help reduce unnecessary conflict, they help children feel safe," paediatric psychologist Dane Channon says.

"When parents discipline one day and fail to do so the next, this can lead to uncertainty, which can result in anxiety. This is further compounded when issues of fairness and approval are triggered."

'Let them speak from the heart and listen to each other'

3 Don't play favourites

Even if one kid is always getting into trouble and the other isn't, don't take sides or compare your kids – it will only make them resent each other more.

4 Don't make everything equal

There's no such thing as perfect equality in a family. An older child will obviously be allowed to do things their younger siblings can't. Instead of getting hung up on trying to make everything equal, treat each child as a unique individual.

This applies to possessions too. While sharing is important, kids don't have to share everything – make sure each of them has something special that's entirely their own.

5 Lead by example

Remember, children copy their parents' behaviour – so think about how you react and manage your own strong feelings, particularly anger.

"If parents can model appropriate and healthy responses to conflict or (Turn over)



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References: 1. South African Medicine Price Registry. Database of Medicine Prices 22 October 2018 (Accessed 26 October 2018). Available at <http://www.mpr.gov.za/PublishedDocuments.aspx>. 2. Mehlisch DR, Sykes J. Ibuprofen blood plasma levels and onset of analgesia. Int J Clin Pract. 2013;67(Suppl. 178):3–8. doi: 10.1111/ijcp.12053.

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