Learning Disabilities and Sibling Relationships - 10 Rules to Avoid Rivalry

It is natural for some degree of sibling rivalry to exist in any family. However, families containing a child with a learning disability run a far higher risk of rivalry, given that the learning-disabled child consumes a lot more of the parent's attention. Here are ten rules to stave off rivalry:

1) Read the book 'Children: The Challenge' by Rudolph Dreikurs, M.D. The book is based on the theory of "logical consequences" and helps with almost any behavioral issue. When my kids were young, I kept it at my bedside so it was available at a moment's notice.

2) Let your children know that a sibling relationship is to be cherished. Friends may come and go, but a sister is always a sister.

3) Let your children settle their own petty squabbles. Tell them you trust that together they can come to a fair resolution (self-fulfilling prophecy). Interfere only if the disagreement becomes physical.

4) Make it apparent you value each child's opinions.

5) Never compare siblings (at least not within earshot). Although you may be tempted, never say, "I wish you were neat like your sister", etc. This only instills resentment and promotes rivalry.

6) When you are alone with each child, say something positive regarding how he/she related to a sibling (i.e. "You were so kind to your brother-I saw how generously you shared your toys. Justin certainly is lucky to have a brother like you." Or, "I admired the way you dealt with Sara and compromised when you were arguing. Sara is certainly fortunate to have you as an older role model.

7) Encourage a positive relationship by eliciting a child's help with a sibling. For example, you might say "Can you please come with me and wheel Jason in the stroller while I walk the dog? I know he likes when you do that, and I love when you help me."

8) Find a talent in each child to compliment in front of family or friends. Be careful to do this equally for each sibling. To avoid rivalry, you need to let each child know they are appreciated and loved for their individuality. If everyone were alike, the world would be a boring place.

9) When the time is right, be honest with your children about a sister's or brother's difficulties. You might say, "Although Anna is smart, she learns differently than you do. Everyone has different strengths. When you play Scrabble, it's kind of like saying someone who you misspells a word."

10) Try to have fun together as a family and laugh as often as you can. In our family, we used to play a game in the car called "Who Would Say This?" Each person thought of something unique that another family member typically says. For example, "Who would say, "Get those blanket-y-blank roller skates out of the hallway. I almost killed myself!"

These suggestions are not meant to imply that your kids will never argue or cause you to lose your cool. But be careful what you say when tension arises. Once words are spoken, they cannot be taken back. Children imitate what they see. If parents set the standards of respect and kindness within the family and find the positive in each child, your children will likely do the same with each other.

Joan M. Azarva, Ms.ED, an expert College Learning Specialist, parent of a successful adult son with LD/ADD, and a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education has experience that spans three decades with students of all ages. In 1993, however, due to the well-documented low postsecondary success rate of students with learning disabilities, Joan decided to focus exclusively on the critical period of high school-to-college transition.

From her professional and personal experiences, Joan learned that not only can proactive measures often fend off failure, they can also produce extremely desirable outcomes. If you are the parent of a high school student with learning difficulties, sign up for Joan's listserv and receive a valuable FREE 55-page E-Book, Interactive Academic Websites, by going to http://www.ConquerCollegewithLD.com.

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September: a Good Time to Support Siblings & Friends of Kids with Special Needs

How To Help A Child With Special Needs Fit In

Children with special needs often need help navigating society, especially at an early age. Playgrounds can be ruthless, school bullies can be relentless, and the constant feeling of being an outsider can be emotionally exhausting. However, with some help, children with special needs can and often do fit in with the children around them.

The first step in helping a child with special needs fit in is to teach them to love themselves. When children feel good about themselves they are more confident and outgoing. This confidence is key to making and keeping friends, as well as to leading a happy, emotionally healthy life.

Lots of children feel isolated by their disabilities, especially if they are noticeable. Don't let your child remain isolated from his or her peers. It may be difficult to interact with children who do not understand the disability, but with enough confidence and support children with special needs can make plenty of friends. Keep in mind that these friends will form a crucial support system for your child, so teach him or her the importance of both being a good friend and choosing good friends.

A great way to get your child socially involved is to take them to camps or other community activities. Day camps are a great way for timid children to meet new friends and build up their confidence, and there are plenty of programs that cater to children with special needs.

It is important that children with special needs interact with both disabled and nondisabled children. Having a variety of friends will allow your child to have a support system that will be capable of helping them through any of their challenges.

Helping a child with special needs fit in may be difficult at times, but doing so will allow the child to build social skills that will last a lifetime.

SOURCE:

PEATC Workshops and Events: September 2013

9/19/2013 - 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.: How to Talk (Spanish Workshop)
Good Shepherd Catholic Church, 8710 Mt. Vernon Hwy., Alexandria, VA 22309; this presentation will include a short review of the USE workshop. For more information, email dmorales@scan.org.

PEATC is now scheduling trainings for Fall/Winter 2013
Do you want PEATC to come train a group of parents or professionals for free?
Contact us 703-923-0010 or partners@peatc.org.
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A Fulfilling Social Life for Special Needs Families

The benefits of a healthy social life extend deeply into the realms of physical well being, emotional strength, self esteem and mental stimulation. The positive results of an active and balanced social life are difficult to ignore. However, the reality of the time, energy, and even courage that is required for developing a robust social life can be a bit daunting. For families where special needs must be accommodated, it can be even more overwhelming and often requires a conscious effort to find opportunities for engagement. Those opportunities are out there though! A number of resources are readily available to help families identify valuable avenues for building a social life that is rewarding and accessible.

Parents of Special Needs Children Need Time Too

For the parents and siblings of a special needs child, it is not always easy to make the time to develop an individual social life. Many times, 24-hour care is required, limiting the time, energy, and resources for engaging in activities outside of the special needs sphere. While it can be a difficult concept to realize, making time for yourself, for your spouse or partner, and for any other children you may have is vital for the long-term well being of your family.

It is understandable that some disabilities can make getting out and experiencing activities on your own seemingly impossible. Sometimes it is more about acknowledging that it is not only OK to take the time, but it is important that you make it a priority to do so. Talking with other families with special needs in a support group format, online chat group or on more of a one-on-one basis can help you process the emotions you may experience in taking the steps to build your own social life.

Siblings of children with special needs often experience their own challenges in regards to socializing. Opportunities can often be confined to those that fit within the schedule or restrictions of a special needs sibling. Individual time with parents can also be limited. While it is often understood by the members in a family with a special needs child that some accommodations have to be made, it is still important to make a conscious effort to encourage social engagement for all family members.

A Social Life for the Special Needs Individual

Meaningful relationships and enjoyable activities will enhance the quality of life experienced by an individual with special needs. Learning new skills and making new friends can provide a sense of self worth and accomplishment for individuals with special needs. At the same time, these social interactions build a valuable support network that can relieve some of the stress from immediate family members.

For adults with special needs, there are many recreational and social groups that emphasize accessibility, encourage relationships, and provide skill development. For some adults with disabilities, the right equipment can make many new opportunities accessible. A streamlined lightweight, folding wheelchair by Convaid could provide the flexibility and maneuverability to make participation in group activities more comfortable and feasible.

For parents of children with special needs, there are a number of resources available online and through local community organizations that provide ideas for networking with other special needs families. Because some social situations can be intimidating, it is important to prepare your special needs child for positive engagement by taking advantage of today’s technology. Wheelchairs that are designed to look more like high performance strollers, like the line of Convaid Cruisers can boost confidence and provide increased access to some activities. There are also social skill applications that are available for the iPad or iPhone that can provide your child with an introduction to the social situations they may encounter.

There are many resources available for you to tap into to make that social life possible!

Babysitting or Care Giving Resources for your Special Needs Child:

Visit Care.com to find local babysitters experienced with special needs children. Take advantage of local community education courses for special needs children. These sessions usually enable you to leave your child in the hands of qualified care givers for an hour or two.

Summer and day camps for special needs children can provide you with a much needed break from full time care giving.

Developing a Social Life for Families with Special Needs-

Online resources:
Parents Helping Parents (PHP.com)
My Child Without Limits Organization (MyChildWithoutLimits.org)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Gina Reed is a Marketing Manager for Convaid Lightweight Wheelchairs in Torrence, CA. Convaid’s core mission is to provide special needs children, adults, and their families the highest quality compact-folding lightweight wheelchairs.


Special Resources for Special Needs Siblings and Friends

ARTICLES

Siblings of Kids with Special Needs: http://www.med.umich.edu/yourchild/topics/specneend.htm
Sibling Issues: http://nichcy.org/families-community/siblings
Support for Siblings of Children with Special Needs.htm
My friend's different: http://www.kidsdotcom.au/schoolzone/Learning-Special-needs-My-friends-different+4700+421+article.htm
Finding Friends for Your Special Needs Child: http://www.bravekids.org/families/caregivers/
Finding friends for your special-needs child/
Fostering Friendships: http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/learning-disabilities/fostering-friendships/

ORGANIZATIONS

Sibling Leadership Network: http://siblingleadership.org/
Parent to Parent USA (P2USA): http://www.p2usa.org/
The Casey Cares Foundation: http://www.caseycaresfoundation.org

CURRICULUMS

OAR’s Kit for Kids: http://www.researchautism.org/resources/KitForKids.asp
COUNT ME IN puppet program: http://www.pacer.org/puppets/count.asp
Promoting friendships amongst special needs and non-disabled children can be difficult, but can result in lasting relationships. One of the biggest obstacles to promoting such friendships is the social taboo of disability.

Another important part of promoting friendships between special needs and non-disabled children is to try and treat all of the children as equally as possible. Every child is different and requires special care in one way or another, but it is important to avoid calling undue attention to these differences. By treating the children the same they will feel as though they belong to one cohesive group, rather than feeling as though they are two groups of children merged together.

Once educated, children are often forgiving of the differences in others. With the proper knowledge and the right amount of attention, all children, disabled and non-disabled alike, will be able to learn how to build lasting friendships with one another.

SOURCE:

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LATINO CORNER: "Rivalidad entre Hermanos" / "Sibling Rivalry"

Estos dos párrafos le ayudarán a entender “Rivalidad entre Hermanos”, para obtener más información y leer el artículo visite, KidsHealth (www.kidshealth.org).

Temperamento personal - El temperamento personal, que incluye el humor, el carácter, la adaptabilidad. La personalidad de sus hijos, desempeñan un papel muy importante en la manera en que se llevan entre ellos. Por ejemplo, si un niño es tranquilo y el otro se inquieta fácilmente, puede que se peleen a menudo. Del mismo modo, si un niño es muy dependiente y apagado a sus padres por comodidad y afecto, es posible que sus hermanos le tengan recelo y quieran la misma cantidad de atención.

Niños con necesidades especiales o enfermos - A veces, las necesidades especiales de un niño debidas a una enfermedad o a problemas de aprendizaje o emocionales requieren más tiempo de los padres. Otros niños pueden notar esta diferencia y comportarse mal para llamar la atención o por miedo a lo que le sucede al otro niño.


These two paragraphs will help you understand “Sibling Rivalry”, for more information and to read the entire article please visit KidsHealth (www.kidshealth.org).

Individual temperaments - Your kids' individual temperaments — including mood, disposition, and adaptability — and their unique personalities play a large role in how well they get along. For example, if one child is laid back and another is easily ruffled, they may often get into it. Similarly, a child who is especially clingy and drawn to parents for comfort and love might be resented by siblings who see this and want the same amount of attention.

Special needs/sick kids - Sometimes, a child's special needs due to illness or learning/emotional issues may require more parental time. Other kids may pick up on this disparity and act out to get attention or out of fear of what's happening to the other child.

http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/sibling rivalry.html