

Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings: How to Stop the Fighting and Raise Friends for Life

By Dr. Laura Markham

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Popular parenting expert Dr. Laura Markham, author of **PEACEFUL PARENTS, HAPPY SIBLINGS**, has garnered a large and loyal readership around the world, thanks to her simple, insightful approach that values the emotional bond between parent and child. As any parent of more than one child knows, though, it's challenging for even the most engaged parent to maintain harmony and a strong connection when competition, tempers, and irritation run high.

In this highly anticipated guide, Dr. Markham presents simple yet powerful ways to cut through the squabbling and foster a loving, supportive bond between siblings, while giving each child the vital connection that he or she needs.

PEACEFUL PARENT, HAPPY SIBLINGS includes hands-on, research-based advice on:

- Creating deep connections with each one of your children, so that each truly believes that you couldn't possibly love anyone else more.
- Fostering a loving family culture that encourages laughter and minimizes fighting
- Teaching your children healthy emotional self-management and conflict resolution skills—so that they can work things out with each other, get their own needs met and respect the needs of others
- Helping your kids forge a close lifelong sibling bond—as well as the relationship skills they will need for a life of healthy friendships, work relationships, and eventually their own family bonds.

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Editorial Review

Review
“Finally, a book that answers your questions around sibling rivalry! In this insightful book, Dr. Markham draws on scientific research to craft smart strategies that any parent can use to help their children resolve their conflicts with empathy, mindfulness and peace. A must-read for every parent.”
--Dr. Shefali Tsabary, bestelling author of *The Awakened Family* and *The Conscious Parent*

“This book delivers hope and help. Laura Markham brilliantly applies her respectful, attuned, limit-setting approach to sibling dynamics. Full of realistic scenarios and scripts for how parents can turn conflict into opportunities to build skills, and turn parental dread into meaningful intervention. *Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings* masterfully coaches parents on how to honor each child’s experience, set limits, reduce conflict, and build skills for life.”
--Tina Payne Bryson, PhD, co-author of *The Whole-Brain Child* and *No-Drama Discipline*

“Parents need all the help they can get to be the kind of parent they want to be, and to use parenting skills that influence their children to be good citizens of the world. Dr. Laura’s book is filled with this kind of help—practical, inspiring, and encouraging though real-life examples. It would have helped me a lot when I was raising my children.”
--Dr. Jane Nelsen, author and co-author of the *Positive Discipline* series

“Adding a child to the family creates a cascade of challenges. Dr. Laura Markham shows parents how to avoid common sibling difficulties, and how to convey their love, even in stressful situations, so children truly feel supported. Open this book, and you'll find clarity, wisdom, workable ideas, and generous helpings of respect for parents and children.”
--Patty Wipfler, founder, Hand in Hand Parenting

"Refreshingly positive and respectful in its tone, *Peaceful Parents, Happy Siblings* lovingly guides parents by using scripts and practical examples, essential tools for any parent with more than one child. Dr. Laura's compassionate approach is empowering for parents, and liberating for children."
--Lysa Parker and Barbara Nicholson, Founders of Attachment Parenting International, and authors of *Attached at the Heart*

“Brothers and sisters rejoice! Here's a family roadmap to transform bickering kids into a connected sibling team. One third of kids have a warm caring relationship with their siblings. Read this book and your family can join the ranks.”
--Heather Shumaker, author of *It's Okay Not to Share*

“A phenomenal book for parents with multiple children! Dr. Markham addresses all of the common sibling issues with sensible solutions to bring peace and foster healthy relationships between siblings. This book will be my constant companion for years to come.”
--Rebecca Eanes, author of *Positive Parenting*

“Whether you are just beginning to contemplate having a second child or you are already frustrated by nonstop sibling fighting, this book is for you. I marveled at the amount of wisdom, compassion, and practical ideas packed into its pages. The wisdom begins with her gentle reminder that we have to start with ourselves

if we want to make meaningful changes in our children's relationships with each other. The compassion is in Dr. Laura's empathy for everyone in the mix—including angry and worried parents. And the ideas aren't just practical and usable—many of them are downright fun. You'll laugh out loud just reading them, and everyone will laugh when you try them out. Wouldn't that be a nice change from bickering and clobbering?"
--Lawrence J. Cohen, PhD, author of *Playful Parenting*

"As a parenting coach, I know that sibling struggles can be heart-wrenching for parents. Dr. Laura's strategies are right on the money to help today's parents create more peaceful homes - and stronger sibling relationships. Great work!"
--Amy McCready, founder of Positive Parenting Solutions and author of *If I Have to Tell You One More Time* and *The "Me, Me, Me" Epidemic*

"This book walks parents through sibling scenarios – even ones for very intense children – and breaks down the specifics of how to approach common struggles, without making parents feel guilty or overwhelmed. It is a wonderful resource that gives parents the tools to not only help our children while in the midst of conflict, but also helps us to teach our children how to be the loving, kind and respectful brothers and sisters we know they can be."
— Gina Osher, *The Twin Coach*

"If you are the parent of more than one child, this is the book for you. Laura Markham begins at the beginning – the how and when to tell your child that they are about to become a big brother or sister -- and then offers concrete suggestions to help you lay down the foundation for a healthy sibling relationship throughout your children's lives. I know that I will highly recommend this book to all my clients."
--Rev. Susan Nason parent educator

" Dr. Laura's examples and coaching-based methodology make parenting siblings far less daunting....Her book reassures us that doing our best with the right tools, including self-regulation, connection, and coaching, can build a much happier and more peaceful family."
--Nancy Peplinsky, Founder & Executive Director of Holistic Moms Network

"In the peaceful parenting household, there are no time-outs. Stickers, toys, and candy are not rewards for good behavior. And when it comes to siblings, children aren't taught to share, but to take turns. With this book, Markham (Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids) aims to help readers effect a subtle but powerful paradigm shift and raise children who are self-regulated and driven by empathy rather than a reward/punishment dynamic. Model conversations are idealized but artfully crafted—"I guess it hurt your feelings when your sister wouldn't let you play with her and her friend... you still can't stand outside her door and scream like that, sweetie"—and provide an entire vocabulary for the book's philosophy. The book's third part is directed specifically toward parents anticipating baby number two, but other chapters offer more than enough solutions for parents already up to their elbows in sibling rivalries and fights. The book draws on scientific studies as much as possible, but the available research findings are often inconclusive. Markham makes her case most through common sense, putting the responsibility on parents to exemplify peaceful, positive behavior that uplifts the entire family."
--Publishers Weekly

About the Author

Dr. Laura Markham is the author of **Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How To Stop Yelling and Start Connecting**, published by Perigee in November 2012.

Dr. Markham earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology at Columbia University in New York. Her clinical practice is entirely devoted to coaching parents, with clients from New York to Australia (via Skype). She monitors the pulse of parents' needs through her very active social network, including her own web site, AhaParenting.com. She speaks frequently with reporters for press as diverse as CNN and Parents Magazine and makes regular TV appearances. Dr. Markham lives in Park Slope, Brooklyn, with her family—and considers her kids – a daughter graduating from high school and a son graduating from an Ivy League university—to be proof that her parenting approach produces responsible, self-disciplined, considerate and happy kids who achieve in the world and stay deeply connected to their parents.

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"It's Not Fair!"

It drives parents crazy. You do your best to be fair, but your children insist on competing over *everything*! Why?

· **A sense of fairness is innate.** Research shows that even babies have some concept of parity. It seems to be one of the human mind's built?in survival mechanisms to help us live in groups.

· **They desperately want to know that you love them more than anyone else, so their survival is ensured.** This is genetically programmed. Their genes want to know whom you would save if a tiger came marauding. If you love their sibling more, they're toast.

· **Children aren't so different from adults.** The entire legal profession is based on the human desire to be treated fairly. The problem isn't that your children want fairness. It's that they think you're supposed to be Solomon and dole it out, but there's no way both children will feel fairly treated by any solution any parent can devise. That's not just because we're fallible humans, but because children in search of fairness are motivated by fear, which is always irrational. Back to the previous point: They need proof the sibling isn't being favored, to ensure their survival.

So how can you deal with the whole concept of fairness without going crazy, and in a way that helps your children feel more secure and less competitive?

1. **Empathize**. Your child has big feelings about this issue. After all, at an unconscious level this is about her survival. Trying to argue your child out of her feelings won't work. Acknowledging them will help her feel understood, which means she can stop fighting. This is the most important thing you can do to help your child with her feeling that things aren't fair.

Instead of arguing: *"Of course you get to go first sometimes, don't exaggerate!"*

Empathize: *"It feels like you never get to go first, huh?"*

Instead of explaining: *"He's older, so he gets to stay up later."*

Empathize: *"You wish you could stay up later . . . It's hard to stop playing and get ready for bed . . . I bet when you're eight like your brother, you'll love staying up later."*

Notice you aren't agreeing. You might even be pretty sure that she went first last night. You're showing her you understand how she feels, nothing more, and nothing less. If you think back to times when you've felt understood, you will understand just how great a gift this is.

2. **Focus on what each child wants rather than getting hooked when they compare or compete**. When your children accuse you of favoring their sibling, you know intuitively that this is a serious accusation. On some level, they're saying you don't have enough love and protection for them, since you're using it up on their sister. Understandably, you can get hooked and argue about who got what. But that's a battle you'll never win. Next time:

Instead of arguing: *"I did not give him more—see, you have the same amount!"*

Acknowledge the need your child is expressing without reference to his sibling, and reassure him that there's always more than enough for everyone: *"It sounds like you're ready for more noodles. Show me how much you want and I'll dish them out for you."*

What if there aren't any more noodles, or you aren't about to give them seconds on dessert? In other words, your child thinks she's been treated unfairly, and you can't (or won't) make it better by giving her what she thinks she deserves to make things fair? *Address the perceived unfairness symbolically, by showering your child with love.* That's what she's actually worried about, even if she doesn't know it. So you might say something like: *"Oh, no! His piece was bigger? I can't believe it—this is terrible! Here I sat, making sure the two pieces were exactly the same, and you're telling me my splitting skills are slipping? You know what that means. If your piece was even hundredth smaller, that means I need to make it up to you—with a hundred hugs and kisses!"* You grab her and fill her up with love. You aren't teasing her, or belittling her need. You're actually meeting her real need—to be as important to you as her brother. You're letting her know that there's always more than enough love for her, no matter what her brother gets. And the laughter helps her work through any fears that were triggered by thinking that you secretly prefer her brother.

3. **Give material possessions based on need; be sure love is limitless.** If one child has outgrown her sneakers and the other hasn't, explain to all the kids that today it's Asia's turn for new sneakers, and Amira will get hers when she outgrows her current pair. Be alert to help Amira past her envy when Asia struts in: *"It can be hard to watch your sister get something new when you didn't . . . Don't worry, when you need shoes, you'll get them, too. You know that no matter what your sister gets, there's always enough for you."* Then give her a huge hug. What she really needs is reassurance that you love her as much as her sister.

4. **Don't be afraid to treat children differently.** Interestingly, several studies in which children were interviewed about how parents treat them and their siblings have found that kids don't mind being treated differently, if they think the outcome is fair.1 They may give you a hard time because their brother stays up later, but they do understand that an older child gets more privileges and more responsibilities. In fact, you might want to talk about this with each child before his birthday. What new responsibility does he think he's ready for?

5. **Fill each child's cup.** The reason children compete is to ensure their survival in the face of danger and scarce resources. So your job as the parent is to love each child so he never needs to wonder if you might love his sibling more. That would be impossible, since he knows your love for him is limitless. In practice, that means:

· You seek him out for hugs and smiles, to look at the fireflies together out the window at dusk, and just to tell him you're so glad you're his mother.

· When he needs you, you show up. If your hands are full, you apologize and tell him when you'll be able to tend to him; then keep your promise.

· You surprise him with little notes, favors, and activities. This takes some mental energy, which as a parent can be in short supply. One solution is to keep little notes on your to?do list, so that every week you do one small special thing for each child.

· You make time for Special Time and the other preventive maintenance practices. Sometimes you take each child, one at a time, for a special adventure on a Saturday afternoon. If they fight about who goes on the first Saturday, while the other kids have to wait until subsequent weeks, you can “sweeten the deal” for the ones who have to wait by giving them longer adventures.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mike Munguia:

What do you think about book? It is just for students because they're still students or the idea for all people in the world, what best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that question above. Every person has distinct personality and hobby per other. Don't to be compelled someone or something that they don't would like do that. You must know how great along with important the book Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings: How to Stop the Fighting and Raise Friends for Life. All type of book could you see on many options. You can look for the internet resources or other social media.

Andrew Fogarty:

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Alexandra Dickey:

In this era which is the greater individual or who has ability to do something more are more special than other. Do you want to become certainly one of it? It is just simple way to have that. What you are related is just spending your time not much but quite enough to enjoy a look at some books. Among the books in the top checklist in your reading list is definitely Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings: How to Stop the Fighting and Raise Friends for Life. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Slopes can get you closer in turning out to be precious person. By looking upwards and review this reserve you can get many advantages.

Cynthia Necaise:

What is your hobby? Have you heard which question when you got scholars? We believe that that concern

was given by teacher to their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everyone has different hobby. And you also know that little person including reading or as studying become their hobby. You should know that reading is very important and book as to be the factor. Book is important thing to provide you knowledge, except your teacher or lecturer. You get good news or update in relation to something by book. A substantial number of sorts of books that can you decide to try be your object. One of them is actually Peaceful Parent, Happy Siblings: How to Stop the Fighting and Raise Friends for Life.

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