



Monthly Parenting Tip from the ACFC

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Sibling Rivalry Strategies



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When Siblings Get on Each Other's Nerves

Close quarters and long hours can test even the best relationships. Instead of focusing on simply "keeping the peace," try using these moments to coach skills siblings can use far beyond the car ride.

1. Share the Responsibility Before You Go

Before the trip starts, involve siblings in setting expectations together:

- How will music be chosen?
- What happens when someone needs quiet time?
- How will disagreements be handled?

When children help create the plan, they're more likely to cooperate—and they learn responsibility along the way.

2. Encourage Problem-Solving Instead of Taking Sides

When tension arises, resist the urge to decide who's right or wrong. Instead, guide them to solve the problem themselves:

- "Sounds like you both want different things. What's a solution you can agree on?"
- "How can we make this work for everyone?"

This approach builds confidence, fairness, and mutual respect—key goals of Active Parenting.

3. Use Encouragement to Build Skills

Notice and name effort, not perfection:

- "You asked for space without yelling—that took self-control."
- "You both figured out a solution. That's real teamwork."

Encouragement teaches children that they're capable and trusted to handle challenges.

4. Make Space for Breaks

Self-regulation is an important skill—but it takes practice. Quiet time, music with headphones, or simply looking out the window can help siblings reset without conflict. Needing a break isn't failure; it's awareness.

5. Remember to Laugh and Connect

Active Parenting values connection as much as correction. Shared laughter, inside jokes, and reminiscing about family memories strengthen relationships and remind siblings they're on the same team.

Siblings teach each other patience, empathy, and cooperation in ways no one else can. With guidance rooted in respect and encouragement, even the most irritating moments can become opportunities for growth.

Celebrate the bond:

- Share a favorite family story
- Point out a strength you see in each sibling
- Remind them that learning to get along is a skill—and they're practicing it every day

To learn more about effective parenting skills, visit the Active Parenting Online Video Library. These helpful videos are offered free of charge by the ACFC in partnership with Active Parenting. Guidance and help are available for parents of children of all ages. To access the Online Video Library, go to the [ACFC website](https://www.acfccares.com), click on the Active Parenting tab, and follow the instructions on how to view the videos.