

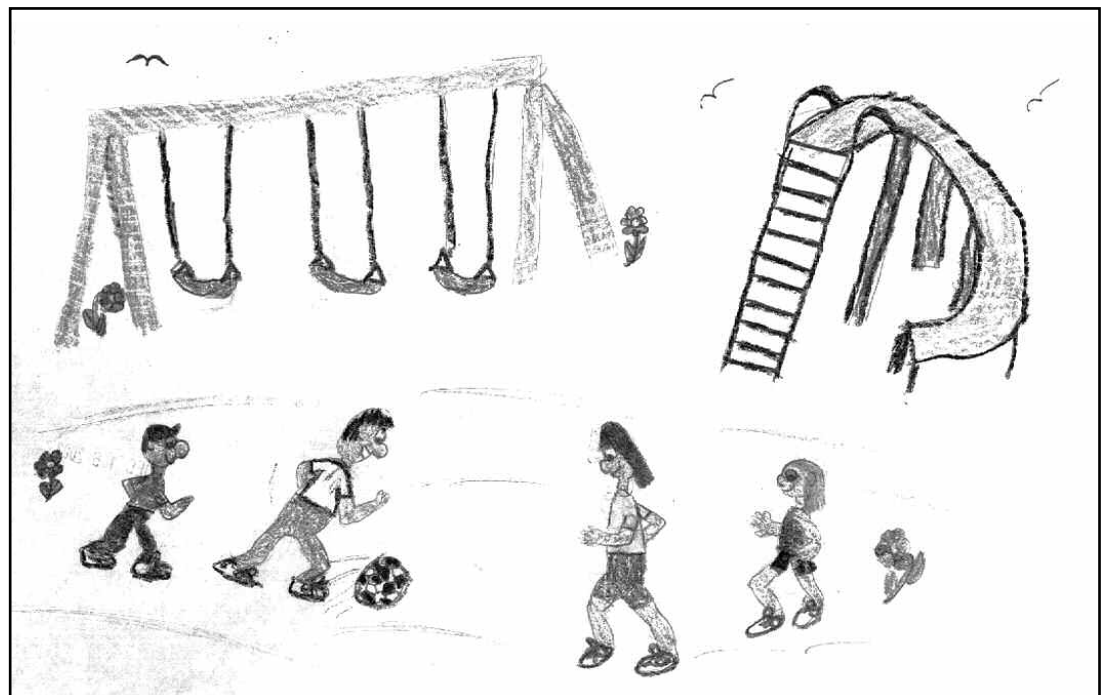
5 Issues Between Siblings

When parents separate, siblings may begin to interact differently. While some siblings become closer at this time, others may argue more than usual. It is hard to predict how your children will respond, but here are some common issues that may arise:



- During the stressful separation period sibling rivalry can become really strong, especially for attention from you and the other parent.
- Sibling rivalry can provoke conflict and negative feelings in siblings towards each other and the parents.
- When children feel confused and angry about the changes at home, they can take their negative feelings out on their siblings.
- If there is conflict between parents, siblings are more likely to have conflict amongst each other as well, as they imitate adult behavior.
- If siblings start taking sides, it can further split them apart.
- Siblings can become closer going through the difficult times together, as they can share their feelings and emotions with each other.
- If older siblings are faced with more responsibilities such as taking care of younger brothers and sisters, it can make them more anxious and distant.

"I think that the separated parents should always be friends and they should let their children know that its not a bad thing to be separated. The children should always know why the parents got separated and that its okay to tell the parents how they feel."



Shelby, Kersley Elementary School

How you can help

- Let all the siblings know that you and the other parent love them equally
- Be a good role-model by resolving all issues in a cooperative and positive way
- Let them know that you don't want them to take sides with either of you
- If conflict occurs, hold all siblings equally responsible
- Spend some time alone with each child talking and listening
- If you need help from your older children taking care of the younger ones, sit down all together and discuss the new roles and responsibilities around the house, making sure that everyone is okay with it, and that they understand why it is necessary, and that they don't feel overwhelmed.