

## The Roots of Sibling Rivalry

A root of sibling rivalry is each child's desire for the exclusive love of his parents. A young child does not understand that love is infinite. When he sees a sibling receiving parental attention, he feels he is loved less.

The young child is driven to feel a sense of belonging and that he is special. When parents treat their children the same, no one feels special. Comparisons, either favorable or unfavorable, also are likely to increase sibling fighting.

Besides the need for parental attention, a child can also fight out of a desire for power, companionship or even boredom. No family with multiple children is free of sibling rivalry. Children actually learn some important life skills when they fight with siblings. However, parents do have influence over how much children fight by how they interact with their children.

It may be helpful to reflect on what your parents did that increased the hostility between you and your siblings. Are you aware of what you do that worsens the relationship? Do you remember what your parents did that decreased sibling rivalry? And what do you do that decreases sibling rivalry?

### Can Care About and Resent Someone at the Same Time

