

Sibling Rivalry and Relationships

Have you ever wondered how teenage siblings who are the best of friends one moment, can hate each other so intensely the next? Sibling rivalry is something that even the best of families will encounter at some point. Life is full of rivalry or competition and the teenage years are no exception.

Although we hate to see our children fighting, sibling rivalry is a way for teenagers to learn appropriate behaviors for getting along with others. It gives them a chance to experiment with and deal with situations they may encounter with other people outside of their family. Of course, if rivalry gets physical it should be stopped immediately before any further harm is done.

What are some reasons for sibling rivalry?

One of the main reasons siblings fight is to get attention from their parents. It can be hard sharing parents with another brother and/or sister. They might feel that the other sibling receives more attention and that they have to act up in order to get any notice. Competing with each other for this attention can lead to many of arguments.

Another popular reason for siblings to fight is jealousy. Feelings of jealousy can arise for a variety of reasons. Teens might be jealous over their siblings looks, talents, accomplishments or friends. They could be jealous over how much time their parents spend with another sibling.

Other reasons and causes for sibling rivalry may include the following.

- **Age difference** - Siblings around the same age might have to share clothes or items. Older teens who have much younger siblings have to deal with being a role model. They might have to cope with the brother and/or sister following them around all the time and wanting to be like them.
- **Birth order** - This can effect the amount of attention the teen gets from parents. Firstborns, might be jealous of time that parents spend with the younger

Handling Sports Pressure and Competition

Most people play a sport for the thrill of having fun with others who share the same interest. But it's not always fun and games. There can be a ton of pressure in high school sports. A lot of the time it comes from the feeling that a parent or coach expects you to always win.

kids in the family. They might resent the fact that because they are older, they are expected to be more independent. Middle children might feel ignored, while the youngest one's might feel excluded by older siblings.

- **Having to share** - This can include sharing materialistic items, such as clothes, rooms or personal belongings. If siblings are close in age they might have the same circle of friends. Sharing time with these friends might create competition.
- **Feelings of favoritism** - Teens might think that their parents like a sibling better than them or that they let them do things that they aren't allowed to do as well.
- **Space/Privacy** - Fights can get started over being bothered by a sibling while wanting time alone to themselves.
- **New baby** - A new baby in the family might create all sorts of sibling rivalry. Competition for attention and time with parents can stir up many emotions and behaviors.
- **Boredom** - Teens that don't have much else to do, might choose to pick a fight with a sibling for entertainment purposes.
- **Outside stressors** - Situations such as divorce, family illness, school problems and peer pressure can cause teens to be stressed. If teens don't know how to handle their stress appropriately, they might end up taking it out on their siblings.
- **Differences in interests/hobbies** - Teens might argue over their likes/ dislikes and differences of opinions.

No matter what reason your teens may have for sibling rivalry, it can be a hard situation to deal with as a parent. You feel like you are living in a war zone and are constantly wondering when and if it will ever stop. Rest assured, there are quite a few solutions that are helpful in preventing and dealing with sibling rivalry.

But sometimes it comes from inside, too: Some players are just really hard on themselves. And individual situations can add to the stress: Maybe there's a recruiter from your No. 1 college scouting you on the sidelines.

Whatever the cause, the pressure to win can sometimes stress you to the point where you just don't know how to have fun anymore.

How Can Stress Affect Sports Performance?

Stress is a feeling that's created when we react to particular events. It's the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness. A little stress or the right kind of positive stress can help keep you on your toes, ready to rise to a challenge.

The events that provoke stress are called stressors, and they cover a whole range of situations — everything from outright danger to stepping up to take the foul shot that could win the game. Stress can also be a response to change or anticipation of something that's about to

happen — good or bad. People can feel stress over positive challenges, like making the varsity team, as well as negative ones.

Distress is a bad type of stress that arises when you must adapt to too many negative demands. Suppose you had a fight with a close friend last night, you forgot your homework this morning, and you're playing in a tennis match this afternoon. You try to get psyched for the game but can't. You've hit stress overload! Continuous struggling with too much stress can exhaust your energy and drive.

Eustress is the good type of stress that stems from the challenge of taking part in something that you enjoy but have to work hard for. Eustress pumps you up, providing a healthy spark for any task you undertake.

Student Stress, Competition & the Educational "Race to Nowhere"

By Tom Ashbrook

Test-heavy, tough love education is “in” — it’s urgent and necessary for America to stay competitive, we’re told.

Now, a new documentary with a different narrative is gaining momentum.

The film “Race to Nowhere” says America’s schools have become test-obsessed, high-stakes pressure cookers. They’re churning out ill-prepared adults short on creativity and ethics, and stripping humanity from kids.

Vicki Abeles, the filmmaker, is a mother of three whose own 12-year-old daughter had problems with school-related stress. Her documentary is making its way across the country in grassroots fashion, airing at PTA meetings, in school gyms and community centers.

“I think today’s system isn’t generating kids who are independent thinkers and ready to contribute to the world,” Abeles says. “So I think we have to ask ourselves whether we are wanting to create a generation of test-takers and resume-builders, or do we want problem-solvers and life-long learners and healthy young adults.”

Of course, there are larger policy concerns complicating the issue. The pressure is on right now for American education and American students. New numbers out last week showed American 15-year-olds well down in the world pack in math, reading, and science, while Chinese students, in particular, ranked very high in many categories.

Denise Pope, a senior lecturer at the Stanford University School of Education, says the debate should not be framed as “‘push’ or ‘not push’ — it’s a lot more nuanced than that.” We should keep these global comparisons in perspective, she says, and students in places such as Shanghai are having some of the same problems with stress and sleep-deprivation.

“There are going to be other countries that are training their kids — and ‘training’ I think is the key word there — to really perform well on those kind of standardized tests,” Pope says. “What I think that test[ing] does not measure is creativity and the ability to solve complex problems. And what we need to think about is, ‘What do we want as a country as the outcome for our high school graduates and for our college graduates?’”

Yong Zhao, professor at Michigan State University’s College of Education and author of *Catching Up or Leading the Way: American Education in the Age of Globalization*, says there’s a lot of data showing that standardized test scores do not predict a nation’s success.

“Many of China’s college graduates cannot find a job,” says Zhao, director of Michigan State’s US-China Center for Research on Educational Excellence. “At the same time international firms in China are actually complaining they can’t find qualified talent—so there’s some irony there... Going after test scores is the wrong indicator to look at for the quality of education.”