



Encouraging the Sibling Bond

The sibling relationship is life's longest lasting relationship..., wrote Michael Bank and Stephen Kahn in *The Sibling Bond*. Some researchers say that this relationship is on par with the parent relationships as being one of the most influential in our lives.

Here are some ideas for how caregivers can help support this relationship to be as healthy and enduring as possible:

- *Create a daily sibling routine:*

Think about ways they say good night to one another or say good-bye. Hugs or special handshakes. Something fun and easy.

- *Do a weekly photo story:*

Take a few pictures of their time together throughout the week. Before bed, one night, review the photos and ask them to talk about what was happening in their time together. Ask what was their favorite part?

- *Encourage sibling support:*

When younger sibling is learning to walk or ride a bike, how can we involve the older sibling to celebrate. Or when an older sibling gets hurt, how can we get the younger sibling to offer a nurturing response.

- *Involve siblings in planned activities together:*

Have them make crafts, gardening, build a fort, or an obstacle course.

Have a plan for managing sibling conflict, be careful to be fair, to minimize rivalry.



References: Bronson, Po. (2009, Aug. 31). *The New Science of Siblings*. ABC News. <https://abcnews.go.com/GMA/Parenting/story?id=8449624>; Neal, Alena. (2017, Dec. 6). *Proof There's Nothing Quite Like a Sibling Bond*. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/sibling-bond-relationship_n_5688921