

Little Bridges News



October 2011

Calendar of Events

Book Fair

10/10 – 10/14

School Age Min. Days

10/10 – 10/14

No Hot Lunch

Friday 10/21

Costume Parade

Monday 10/31 9:30 AM

Enrichment Classes

Soccer Shots (3-5 yrs)

Mondays

Art Classes (3-5 yrs)

Tuesdays

Kinderdance (3-5 yrs)

Wednesdays

Tuff Tumblers (2-4 yrs)

Thursdays

Science/Math/Magic (3-4)

Mondays & Thursdays

Art & Soul Music (K-5)

Guitar & Piano Lessons

Book Fair 10/10 – 10/14

The Book Fair will be set up in the preschool office, October 10th to October 14th. Please come in and help build Little Bridges' classroom libraries. There are 3 easy ways that you can help.

1. Buy books. Come in and purchase books. Every book you buy earns us "book credit" to purchase books. Our profit from the total sales is **50%**! So, if you purchase \$20.00 in books, Little Bridges receives \$10.00 to spend on books for the school.

2. Purchase books for your child's class. Teachers have chosen age appropriate books that they would love to see in the classroom and have compiled "Wish Lists" that will be posted in the office. Pick a card from their list and donate it to your child's classroom library. Your child will love seeing his or her book in the classroom!

3. Purchase gift certificates for your teachers or child in any amount you want and let them come in and shop. We still earn the 50% credit on top of your gift!

Little Bridges Costume Parade

On Monday, October 31st, all preschool and school age children will parade around in their costumes at 9:30 a.m. We will rope off an area in the parking lot for the parade route. Please come, watch, cheer and take pictures!

It is easiest to send your child to school in their costume with a bag of clothes to change into. Please label everything and remember that anything scary or violent (including masks and weapons) are not appropriate for a school setting.

Parking Lot Safety

Please drive SLOWLY through the parking lot and be extra cautious as you back out of your parking space. Little ones are hard to see.

DO NOT LEAVE YOUR SMALL CHILDREN IN AN UNATTENDED CAR! In California, according to Kaitlyn's Law, a parent, legal guardian, or other person responsible for a child who is 6 years of age or younger may not leave that child inside a motor vehicle without being subject to the supervision of a person who is 12 years of age or older.

Stop the Fighting!

Saturday morning, I sat at the kitchen table drinking a cup of coffee while my sons, 6 and 5, played quietly in the family room. Suddenly, that dreaded word—"Mine!"—shattered the peace. Screaming and crying, Taylor and Liam struggled over, of all things, a six-inch stuffed monkey. I jumped up, annoyed that my peaceful day off was starting with a battle, and shouted for them to "Knock it off!" (I really do try to practice what I preach, but at times it IS hard). Later, I was upset with myself for the bad example I had set by yelling in order to stop their yelling (duh...)

I certainly understand that sibling fights are normal. Like most parents, I want my children to be there for each other when they grow up—and I know this can eventually happen (my two older sons, 23 and 22, who used to fight the same way are now best friends), but it is frustrating when you feel like a referee instead of a parent.

By thinking ahead and using positive discipline techniques, we parents really can keep these disputes from turning into nasty battles and encourage a stronger bond between our kids.

Teasing Triggers

Common causes range from the obvious, such as hunger and fatigue, to more hidden ones: A bad day at school may be the real reason your child shoves his brother. Boredom is another trigger. It can be fun to tease a sibling when there's nothing else to do. Just ask Liam, my 5-year-old, who sometimes stands in front of the TV while his 8-year-old brother, Taylor, is watching it—just to bug him! But, if I help Liam find something to do, he magically stops annoying his little brother.

A desire to stake out an identity can also spur other petty squabbles. Sometimes a child who taunts her sibling for being a crybaby may be subtly showing off how cool she is in contrast.

Then there are developmental differences. A 4-year-old may brag to "one up" their sibling ("I got a treat at the store with mom"), whereas an older child may not need to announce such a "score." But when provoked with such a statement that older child will stab back with "You're bragging!" and their fight takes off.

And then some sibling conflicts are pure power plays. A showdown over who loaded the dishwasher last may be one child's way of announcing to the other, "You're not my boss!" I still remember a struggle between my older boys when they were about 7 and 8. One evening, the youngest made place cards for the dinner table, just for fun. But when it came time to sit down, my oldest refused to sit in his assigned seat—reducing his brother to tears. My oldest claimed it was a "stupid idea," but I know to this day that he refused just because it was his brother's idea.

Look for Patterns

The first step to minimizing your kids' fighting is to look for a cause, and a pattern may be your best clue. A mom recently told me that her daughters would always fight on the way home from their morning preschool classes. She said she finally realized that they were hungry for lunch by 12:30 after a long morning. By handing out a healthy snack on the ride home, she cut their bickering in half.

Other sibling squabbling is fueled by competition. Siblings are often constantly jockeying to establish who's "better" or to get each other in trouble. I sure remember the one-upmanship that used to go on between my brother and me. For this sort of situation, try channeling the competitiveness in a more healthy direction. For example, encourage each child to aim for a personal best at something she loves, whether it's shooting baskets outside or building block towers.

Kid-Based Solutions

In general, the more you can get your children to solve their own conflicts, the better off your whole family will be. By learning how to negotiate and compromise with one another, your kids will strengthen their social and communication skills. Siblings in conflict are discovering how to be good winners and good losers. Learning to cooperate helps siblings form strong relationships. This takes patience on your part. I try to stay nearby when trouble is brewing, and give my kids a smile of approval if they work out a solution. If they can't, I try guiding them with questions, "What can you do instead of hitting?" or "Can you think of something else to share?"

You'll have to intervene, of course, if a fight becomes malicious or physical. Just avoid choosing sides. It can be very difficult to determine which child is the instigator—and your kids' personality differences can add to the confusion. A sensitive child might come to you screaming after his sister shoots him one goofy glance. A more resilient child might take a slew of insults and then slug her brother. Often, it's better to declare a cease-fire than to get in the middle of their battles.

If, as a last resort, you need to give an executive order, avoid vague statements such as "Play nicely" or "Please get along." Instead, spell out your expectations: "You get up to bat for four pitches, then you." It's fine to tell your kids, "This is how it's going to be," as long as you've made an effort to be fair.

Sibling Strategies

Here are a few other tactics that will help you keep the peace.

Set standards. Create house rules of conduct, such as “No hitting” and “No calling anyone ‘stupid.’” Then, during a fight, you can fairly discipline whoever broke a rule.

Break it up. Sometimes threatening your children with a separation works wonders. Saying, “You have five minutes to settle this, or you’ll have to stop playing together” may be all you need. If you do have to follow through, keep the separation short.

Don’t try to force togetherness. Ordering your kids to play with one another, when they don’t want to, only builds resentment.

Look for lessons. Once a situation cools down, have your children take turns examining their feelings. Ask them, “What could you do next time so you both don’t feel bad?” Help your kids see that being considerate feels good.

Spread the word. Whenever your children work out things on their own, make sure they know you’ve noticed. Praise them to your spouse when they negotiate well. You’ll reinforce the idea that cooperation wins approval.

Find other ways to encourage thoughtfulness. After my husband and I started asking our kids what nice things they did for someone else that day, they in turn began treating each other more kindly.

With these strategies, you’ll discipline effectively and nurture your kids’ relationship, which ultimately means less rivalry and more revelry.