

The Counselor's Clipboard



Winter Break will be here before you know it. If your house is like mine, there is one thing you can count on after the wrapping paper is thrown away, the enthusiasm over new toys has worn off, and school has been out for a few days - arguments!

What can be done about arguments between siblings or play date guests before your blood starts to boil? First, understand the causes of most arguments.

- Boys tend to argue over who's right and who's wrong, bragging, who does better at sports or in school, the rules of games, and insults/name calling.
- Girls argue over gossip/rumors, having secrets told, 'boyfriends', feeling jealous or left out, and mean remarks behind people's backs.

So, what's a parent to do? Try these tips:

- Express empathy. Don't solve the problem.

"I can see you're upset."

"Arguments are never fun. They get everybody hurting."

- Don't ask 'why', ask 'what'.

Instead of asking, "Why are you arguing? Why can't you get along?", try "What did your friends say?" "What did you do?" "What do you want to happen now?"

- Call for time-outs.

Teach your child to cool off. She could say something like, "I'm too mad to talk right now." Or "Give me a minute to cool off." Or "Let's just shoot some hoops."

- Encourage the child(ren) to work it out.

Say something like, "Let's see if you two can work this through calmly for three minutes. You've been friends for too long not to solve this." "How was Patrick feeling?" "What would he think is fair?"

- Encourage learning

When your child successfully solves a friendship problem, help her remember it for next time.

"That was a great idea. You should try that the next time."

Adapted from, Nobody Likes Me, Everybody Hates Me. By Michele Borba, Ed.D.

