

Rules of Thumb

- **Show kindness & respect to family members**

- Don't let your child treat their sibling differently than you would let them treat a friend or classmate. Yes, siblings have more opportunities to disagree, but that also means opportunities to practice building a relationship filled with kindness and respect.
- Expect your child to speak to you the same way they would speak to a caregiver, teacher or grandparent. Learning good manners and how to respect authority begins with you.

- **Kids can solve problems**

- Practice saying "How can you solve that problem?" when your child comes to you with a conflict.
- Let them try their idea (and possibly experience failure) and also offer a suggestion or two of your own.
- Give guidance to empower your child to be a problem solver instead of you being the problem fixer.

- **Calm Down First**

- Only address conflict when all parties involved are calm (including you!).
- Answer, "I can help you when you are calm" or "What can you do to calm down first?".
- When adults are upset say, "I need to calm down before I talk to you about this" then follow up by talking with your child later. "Later" might mean in 10 minutes, one hour, or even the next day. It's okay to wait. The problem situation won't magically disappear if you take extra time to think it through.

- **Preview & Role Play**

- As much as possible, role play scenarios involving conflict with your child *before* they happen.
- Example: "If you two are going to build with LEGO bricks together, what are you going to do when you both want to use the same piece?"
- Or, "Do you remember last time we went to the playground and you got really upset when it was time to leave? What can we do this time so that doesn't happen again?"
- Let your kids be a part of creating a solution.