



enabling parents to bring
out the best in their children

Sibling disputes –how to intervene effectively

The basic approach is to:

- ☺ describe the problem
- ☺ acknowledge how each child feels
- ☺ help the children find a solution

Example: Jack, aged 5, wants to watch Peppa Pig on TV but Bella, aged 8, is watching her 'Frozen' DVD and singing (loudly) along to 'Let it go'.

Jack says *"I want to watch Peppa now Bella"* and Bella just says *"no"*, so Jack hits her, saying *"It's my turn now horrible Bella."* And Bella shouts and hits him back. Jack cries.

Dad thinks it's time to intervene and *doesn't* say *"Ok, you two that's enough. Bella don't be so mean, give Jack a turn"*. (He did that last week and it ended in tears all round.)

Dad: *Jack I can see you're upset. We don't hit in this family. Can you tell Bella what you want, rather than calling her names?*

Jack: *She's being mean. I want a turn.*

Bella: *But it's my turn now. I want to watch the end of this video.*

Jack: *You watched it on the weekend. I want to watch Peppa now.*

Dad: (Dad has some sympathy – he wouldn't mind some respite from 'Let it go' himself.) *Jack is saying he wants a turn to watch his show. Bella is saying she's not ready for her turn to be over....Hmm...That's a tough situation...I know it can be hard to wait, Jack.*

Jack: *I don't want to wait...I want to watch Peppa now! Bella gets to watch her show all the time.*

Dad: *You feel you're not getting a fair go? Can you tell Bella that and ask her when she'll be ready to give you a turn? Bella can you tell Jack, without hitting, what would be a fair time for you to have on the video.*

Jack: *It's not fair Bella, you had a turn on the weekend and I haven't had my turn for ages. When will it be my turn?*

Bella: *Ok Jack! You can watch Peppa when the next song is finished. Why don't you be Olaf?*

Dad gives lots of Descriptive Praise for both children for resolving this situation constructively. Both kids feel heard and they have learnt how to assert themselves without hitting.