

Sibling Conflict Intervention Guide

Judy Dunn's Theory of Mind Protocol: Turning Daily Disputes into Social Intelligence

1. The Three Tiers of Sibling Conflict

Conflict Level	Observed Behavior	Recommended Parental Action
Level 1: Minor Bickering	Verbal disagreement over turns, minor teasing, grumbling.	Do Not Intervene. Allow children to negotiate and test communication boundaries.
Level 2: Heated Deadlock	Voices raised, crying, physical blocking, deadlock over toy.	Reflect Emotions, Not Solutions. Say: 'You both want the truck. What can we do?'
Level 3: Physical Harm / Abuse	Hitting, biting, cruel degradation, safety compromised.	Immediate Physical Separation. Focus on safety first; debrief when calm.

2. The Theory of Mind (ToM) Debrief Questions

Cognitive Goal	Scripted Question to Child A	Scripted Question to Child B
Perspective Taking	'Look at your sister's face right now. How do you think she felt when the tower fell?'	'How did you feel when you asked for a turn and he didn't answer?'
Intentionality Decoding	'Do you think he knocked it down on purpose, or was his elbow too close?'	'Did you want to hurt him, or were you trying to protect your space?'
Collaborative Repair	'What can we do to make this right before we start playing again?'	'What rule should we agree on so this doesn't happen next time?'