

# The Joy of Siblings

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August 4, 2014

**There are many times I wonder if I am completely screwing up everything about this parenting gig.**

Are we disciplining too much or not enough? Am I too much of a helicopter mom or maybe not enough of one? Is it horrible that one time I forgot hand sanitizer at the park and still let them eat their sandwiches? Have we gone too far by having four kids in six years? Will they be scarred forever without enough attention?

But when I feel my fears start to overwhelm, there is only one thing I need to do to calm the storm:

**Watch my children play together.**

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I know there are no guarantees in life, of course, and quite frankly, my children could grow up and grow apart, but right now, I am a firm believer in the fact that giving our children siblings to learn from and play with is truly a gift.

And it helps me too, as I count down the last days before we bring home baby #4, to think that all the sleepless nights, the pain of childbirth, the chaos that will fill my days—they aren't just for me.

They are also for *them*. For our family.

Because over the years, we have created something truly remarkable. Not out of any of our own skills or abilities, of course, but in something that I am blessed to behold and slow to recognize on the tough days. I may worry about how much my kids seem to fight or sigh over the latest, "Why did she get more?!" complaint, but at the end of the day, when I sneak in to tuck a blanket around two sleeping sisters and see their hands clasped together still in sleep, my heart swells with gratitude that they have each other.

When all three children ask me every morning, "Is the baby coming today, Mom?" I can smile and find a little bit of strength to keep going in the last stretch of a painful pregnancy.

When the "baby" squeals and runs after his big sisters and they hold his hand and guide him, I can feel a pride that they will always help him find his way.

And when I hear the whispered giggles of three children playing in their tent together, my husband and I can shake our heads at the sounds that are too precious to be fleeting.

And when we unwrap a soft, pink baby blanket and introduce a new baby girl to her boisterous brother and older sisters, I can only say a prayer of thankfulness —

**For the pure joy of siblings.**

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