

FREE SEMINAR

Healthy sibling rivalry

PSYCHOLOGIST SAYS TO LET KIDS BATTLE

Charis Chang

CONSTANT family squabbling can be exhausting for parents but it's not always a good idea to control sibling rivalry, says psychologist Dr Veronica Harris.

Dr Harris will host a free seminar for parents at Warringah Mall today about solving sibling rivalry.

The clinical psychologist and mother-of-two said minor sibling squabbles were normal but many parents found it frustrating and upsetting when children constantly fought.

She said the trend for smaller families and more parental involvement made it more tempting for parents to step in but this could produce more reliant children.

"Research shows that sibling rivalry can have healthy and good long-term impacts on children's development," she said.

"The opportunity to deal with conflict benefits them



Dr Veronica Harris with children Callum, 6, and Eloise, 3, says it's not always a good idea to control sibling rivalry.

Picture: SIMON CHILLINGWORTH

with better negotiation skills, tolerance, assertiveness and compromise."

If parents intervened too regularly, these skills are not developed, even though it might feel "calmer to be in a family with a tighter hold," she said.

"Knowing when to step in was key and should occur when something or someone was being hurt physically.

"But the idea is not to take control but to facilitate discussion. The kids can work it out themselves."

SOLVING THE FIGHTING

■ **WHAT:** Free seminar held by Kids First Children's Services at Warringah Mall community room, located on Level 2 above the library.

■ **WHEN:** Today, from 7.30pm to 9pm.

■ **BOOKINGS:** Go to kids-first.com.au or call 9938 5419.