WHEN KIDS ARE FIGHTING: WHAT ACTUALLY HELPS

1. Pause yourself first
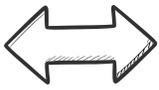Take one breath before jumping in.
A calm voice works faster than raising it. Kids match your tone whether you want them to or not.

2. Separate only if things are getting physical
If it's too intense, move them apart for a few minutes. No punishment, no lecture — just space.
Try: "Let's pause. I need you in different rooms for a minute."

3. Hear both sides without picking one
You don't need to decide who's right. Just reflect what you're hearing.
Try: "So you're mad because…" or "And you're frustrated because…"
Being heard usually cools things down.

4. Help them say it better
If they're yelling or name-calling, step in and reset it.
"Try: Tell me what you're upset about without insulting."
And yes — stop still means stop.

5. Give them something to calm down
Breathing, squeezing something, sitting quietly for a minute — whatever works.
For younger kids, count together or breathe together. Keep it simple.

6. Problem-solve after things settle
Once everyone's calmer, ask: "What do you need right now?" or "How can we fix this?"
No big speeches.

7. Notice when it goes better later
When they handle something well, say it: "That went better." or "That was a good fix."

Bottom line:
You're not trying to prevent conflict.
You're teaching them how to move through it.
And it's okay if it's messy.

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