

More Fun with Sisters and Brothers Program

Informed Consent Form

This form is to confirm your participation in the online version of the “More Fun with Sisters and Brothers Program” and to explain its procedures. Your participation in this project is voluntary. Dr. Laurie Kramer is Emeritus Professor of Applied Family Studies at the University of Illinois and Professor of Applied Psychology at Northeastern University.

One problem that many families face is how to help young children get along with greater closeness and minimal conflicts. The More Fun with Sisters and Brothers Program is designed to help parents teach their 4- to 8-year-old children social and emotional skills that previous research has shown can help siblings relate more positively with one another. As this is a relatively new program, this project is also designed to evaluate its effectiveness.

The More Fun with Sisters and Brothers Program consists of four online lessons that include written information, videos, and interactive learning exercises. Each lesson will take about 45 minutes to review. We ask that you complete one lesson a week for four weeks, although you may complete them more quickly if you wish to do so.

You will be given a personal ID and passcode to access each of the four lessons on the secure More Fun with Sisters and Brothers Program website. You may access the lessons from any computer you like, and in any private location you select, but you will need internet access. You do not have to complete an entire lesson in one sitting. You can pick up where you left off when you sign in again. You can always return to previous lessons if you wish to do so.

In order to evaluate whether this program is effective in helping young children form more positive sibling relationships, we will ask you to complete some questionnaires about how your children get along with one another at the beginning and at the end of the program. We will also ask you to fill out some questionnaires, both before you access the lessons and afterwards, about how your family operates, your marital or couple relationship, and your personal reactions related to parenting siblings. (You are free to skip any items that you prefer not to answer.) The questionnaires will take about 45 minutes to complete. During the course of the program, you will be asked to fill out a brief progress report online before each new lesson to help us understand how you and your children may be benefiting from the program. Completion of the online progress reports should take approximately 5 minutes.

If you choose to participate in this program and indicate your consent below, you will be redirected to a webpage with a link to a set of questionnaires. You may complete the questionnaires at your own pace. Once you have completed the questionnaires, you will be given an access code for the first lesson. After each lesson, you will see a link to complete the brief progress report, which will then unlock the next lesson. Once you have completed all four lessons, and the final set of questionnaires, we will ask you to tell us what you thought about the program using an online evaluation form.

Finally, in order to see if there are any long-term benefits to participating in the "More Fun with Sisters and Brothers" program, we will contact you by email three months following

the end of the program and ask you to complete a brief questionnaire about your children's current relationship.

In the event that there is a necessary delay in providing the program to you (for example, because you may be randomly assigned to a control group that doesn't start the program for four weeks), you may be asked to provide some updated information about your children's sibling relationship. This will ensure that that we have the most recent information about your children before we begin the program.

This study is intended to learn whether the "More Fun with Sisters and Brothers Program" is an effective way to help parents help their children develop better sibling relationships. It is not an evaluation of you or your family. There are no expected or "correct" behaviors. Participation is voluntary and you are free to discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. The decision to participate, decline, or withdraw from participation will have no effect on you or your family's status at, or future relations with, the University of Illinois or Northeastern University. Please know that all research assistants working on this project are mandated to report any indications of child abuse or neglect.

All information collected from you will be kept confidential and will be secured on a website maintained by the University of Illinois. All questionnaires will be given a coded identification number with family names omitted to ensure confidentiality. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University Policy, study information you supply may be seen or copied by the following people or groups: (a) The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects; (b) University and state auditors, and Departments of the university responsible for oversight of research; and (c) Federal government regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services and our funders from the U. S. Department of Agriculture. We will send you a summary of our results at the end of the project. Any reports or publications based on this research project will only use group data and will not identify you or any of your family members as being affiliated with this project.

The results of this study will help us to better serve families with children who experience difficulty in getting along with their brothers or sisters. It will also help researchers to learn more about how children relate to their siblings. An additional benefit of participating in this research is that you may gain a better understanding of your own family relationships and feel more prepared to promote positive interactions among your children. While you will not be paid for completing the questionnaires, you will be provided with free access to the online program. And, as a token of appreciation for completing the study, you will be provided with a Certificate of Completion and a set of More Fun with Sisters and Brothers Program educational materials designed to help you and your children continue using the skills learned through the program. Although we will do everything in our power to minimize this, it is possible that you may find some of the information and skills in the online lessons to be difficult to apply. We will do all that we can to answer your questions or provide further information that should help you to feel better equipped to help your children get along.

Please do not share the content of the online lessons with individuals other than your immediate family members as these are copyrighted materials.

Please contact me at any time if you have any questions, I can be reached at lfkramer@illinois.edu or l.kramer@northeastern.edu. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at irb@illinois.edu or the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board (Phone: (617) 373-4588, email: n.regina@neu.edu).

We sincerely thank you for your assistance with this research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laurie Kramer".

Laurie Kramer, Ph.D.
Professor