



Timid child

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One of the **major lessons** all parents have to learn is **not to compare** their children! **Siblings** often appear like **chalk and cheese** and **comparisons** always seem to imply an **element of criticism** of one or other child.

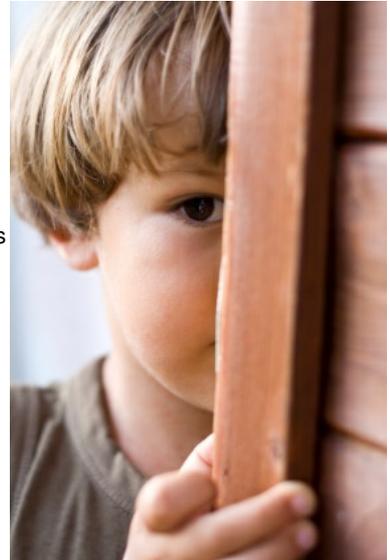
Although **children** of the same parents are **genetically** related they are not **environmentally related** which means that their **character** and **personality** are also influenced by their **non-shared** environment. Your **daughter** was born three years before and into a **different set** of circumstances. Your son, as a **second child**, has perhaps felt **in awe** and in the **shadow** of his "full of beans" sister. But **above all** he is a completely **different person**.

Is your son actually **unhappy** with his lot? Just because he is **quiet** doesn't mean he isn't **enjoying life**. And maybe he **seems quieter** because his **sister** is so **lively**? How does he **compare** with his **classmates**?

You say he's a **worrier** - some of us are **born** that way! But **do you know** what he is **worrying about**? Get him to **talk** about things **generally** – about his day, school etc and really **listen carefully** for what is **not said** as much as **what is**. Acknowledge any **concern** he has and **talk** about ways of **overcoming** or dealing with it, **asking** him for **suggestions** and letting him **see** that he can come up with **solutions**. This will build up his **confidence**.

Never **dismiss** a worry. To him it's **real**. For instance **some children** worry about their **parents dying** or becoming seriously **ill**, brought on by a **classmate's** mother or father **dying** or even something that **happened** in a book or **television** programme. In fact **make a point** of watching TV with him and **talking** about what **happens** in the programmes, how would **he react** to such and such a situation etc. **Remember** too that a minor row between **parents** is often **misinterpreted** by children as **meaning** that their parents are about to **divorce**!

Children worry about all sorts of things and it's **up to us** to give them the **confidence** to see there are **ways** around most **problems**. Give both your children a **chance** to have some time alone with you – and be **alert** for any **worries** your son may have and want to **discuss**.



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