

Advice for middle children, aka "The Peacekeepers"

Typical traits: negotiator, insightful, realistic, creative, independent, passive, solitary

- **Be Switzerland:** Middle children grow up literally in the center of things and tend to see both sides of an issue. In adulthood, this knack for diplomacy often places you squarely in the middle of sibling disputes. Encourage squabbling siblings to find common ground, but that's your limit.
- **Don't seek peace at any price:** You know to avoid negotiating sibling truces. But middle children often shy away from all conflict, which puts them in a harmful people-pleasing role. Instead, learn to communicate — and defend, when necessary — your feelings. "Speak your mind," Haskew says. "You're as equal as they are."
- **Establish an identity outside your family:** Middle children possess a powerful need to feel special among siblings because they often lacked a clear family role growing up.

Think about it: When parents introduce children, they'll say, "This is Mike, my oldest" or "This is Sarah, my youngest." When it comes to middle children, parents may simply say, "This is Jane."

From an early age, the middle child's family role may have been hazy — even to parents — and as a result middle children often spend a lifetime trying to find their "place." Make it a priority to establish your own likes and dislikes and outside relationships, all of which help strengthen your identity and set you apart from siblings.

Middleborns. Although *less research has focused on middle borns, they are generally described as nonconformitive and noncompetitive, compromising, and diplomatic resulting from their position between older and younger siblings.*

Secondborns and middle children

Secondborns and middle children often feel invisible. Parents need to make a special effort to seek out their opinions in family discussions. Finding out what special talents or interests these children have and encouraging them through classes or events makes them feel like they matter and are as important as firstborns or lastborns. All of the children in family then feel special and loved as the unique individuals they are.

Birth Order: In the Middle

If you're a "middle child," you might feel like you were born too late to get the special first-born treatment. For example, the first time a baby says "mama" is a big-time event in a parent's life. When they have a second



baby, and he or she says "mama," the parents are just as proud, but it doesn't usually pack the same "wow." This might be why many middle and youngest children find fewer photos of them in the family photo albums, or at least fewer photos of them by themselves. Kids that come along later are sharing their parents' attention, while the first-born didn't have to share.

You might also feel like you were born too early to get the attention that the "baby" of the family gets. But there's a bright side! Did you know that middle children usually have it easier than their oldest or

youngest siblings?

Here's why: Your family was probably super-nervous about everything your oldest sibling did, but by the time you came into the picture, they might have been more like, "She ate dirt again? Oh, well. It won't kill her."

Parents are often more easy-going and less demanding with second and third children. As a result, many middle children end up with a more relaxed attitude towards life than their older sibs.

Here are some personality traits that are common in middle children:

Roll with It: Middle children often handle disappointments better. Say you strike out in softball and lose the game. If you were a first-born, you might feel guilty all day, but if you're a middle child, you'll probably find yourself just laughing it off.

Great Negotiator: Middles can be great at seeing both sides of an issue. After all, they're in the perfect place for it!

Lots of Loyal Friends: Middles tend to make friends easily. Once they have them, they often work harder to keep them. They're usually good at keeping secrets, too.

Famous Folks in the Middle:

Men

Jay Leno
Donald Trump

Women

Susan B. Anthony
Barbara Walters

If you're a middle child, these feelings may be familiar:

- "I'm tired of being left out of things."
- "Nobody understands me!"
- "Nobody ever listens to me!"
- "I'm always in the shadow of my older sister/brother."
- "My youngest brother/sister gets away with everything."

Sometimes middle children have to try a little harder to "be heard" or get noticed, so remember: if you feel like you're being treated unfairly or not getting the attention you need, talk to a parent about it. They might not even realize what's been going on.

Middle children are really special because the term "middle" can mean so many different things. For example, you could be the second of three kids, the third of four kids, the fifth of six kids, or a twin.