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**ASPEN  
Answers**

by Kathleen Cook, MS, LMFT

**FIGHTING IN FRONT  
OF YOUR KIDS?**

Parents should bear in mind that heated family arguments, whether or not they involve the children directly, leave lasting impressions. In fact, it only takes harsh words, not physical altercation, to leave a lingering impact in the minds of children that can endure for more than a decade. According to a landmark study that began with kindergartners more than three decades ago, 15-year-olds exposed to their parents' verbal battles were more likely to be functioning poorly 15 years later than children not exposed to escalating arguments at home. Even more serious repercussions arise when a child is the object of parental argument and scorn. To head off such problems, parents need to learn constructive ways of engaging one another.

If you settle disagreements in front of your children in a calm, respectful manner, you teach them skills in resolving conflict. Unresolved arguments and tension can hang a cloud of confusion, anxiety, and sadness over your children. For assistance with communicating more effectively when conflicts arise, we offer a supportive, constructive plan designed to reduce stress and reconnect relationships. Call us at Aspen Family Counseling at 608-742-5020 for an appointment today. We are located at 2639 New Pinery Road, Suite 1, in Portage.

*P.S.: Remember your children do not expect you to be perfect... when mistakes are made a sincere apology and a conscious effort to do it differently next time can mean the world to them.*

**ASPEN**  
Family Counseling  
[www.aspenfamilycounseling.com](http://www.aspenfamilycounseling.com)