FIFTH GRADE
LESSON VI
BIRTH ORDER

Objectives
Students will
• Demonstrate the value of communication with parents
• Discuss changes in families and the effects on relationships
• Explain the need for positive interpersonal relationships
• Describe the advantage of building relationships based on mutual respect
• Recognize stereotyping and its consequences
• Discuss the concept of birth order

Concepts
1. Research about birth order has shown that personality characteristics and abilities are affected by whether a person is oldest, middle, or youngest child. Oldest children tend to take on parent-like roles while second are more interested in friendships. Oldest children also seem to get more attention from parents and are more pressured to achieve. Fathers tend to be more involved with oldest children.
2. Other children born five or more years after the oldest children tend to act similar to the oldest child.
3. The importance of birth order is widely disputed among professionals of child development. It is recognized that as parents have children they are changing and developing also, and thus treat each child somewhat differently.

Materials
• Markers, 4 large pieces butcher paper
• Teachers use “Birth Order Summary”
• Question box

Activity Choices
1. Ask, “how many students have brothers and sisters?”
2. Discuss what students like about having brothers and sisters.
3. Identify students who have no siblings. “What is it like to be an only child?” (If none, ask what they think it might be like)
4. Group students according to their birth order-only, oldest, middle, youngest. Have each group:
   A. Use chart paper to list advantages of that particular birth order
   B. Be ready to share responses through one spokesperson for each group
   C. Compare and contrast each group’s responses
   D. Discuss how siblings make one another happy
   E. Ask if they think sons and daughters are treated differently in families. Discuss how they are treated differently.
F. How do parents show they care about their sisters and brothers?
G. Discuss jealousy among siblings and possible reasons for these feelings. Refer to chart made by students in their birth order group.
H. Discuss research about birth order and elicit responses from students.
I. Define stereotyping as a preconceived idea; a belief that all people belonging to a certain group act in a certain way.
J. Ask, “How does this apply to birth order?” Example: the “baby” of the family is often perceived as a baby (even at age 40?) and a bit helpless.

5. Exceptional Education Inclusion Activities
   A. Group inclusion student with students who can assist them
   B. Have students draw pictures of what they do with their siblings
   C. Have student bring in photos of their brothers and sisters (or family photo, if they have no siblings)

**Birth Order Summary**

Research about birth order has shown that personality characteristics and abilities are affected by one’s birth order position. It could affect personality, marriage, children, occupational choice and how one gets along with others.

A simple version of the three main birth order positions are:

- The eldest (and along with them the “only” born)
- The second (or middle-born)
- The babies (last born, the youngest)

Some general characteristics of each birth order are:

The eldest or only children are; perfectionistic, reliable, conscientious, list makers, well organized, critical, serious, and scholarly.

The second born children are; mediators, independent, extreme loyalty to the peer group, mavericks and have the fewest pictures in the family photo album.

Characteristics of babies are; manipulative, charming, shows off, people person, good salesperson, precocious, and engaging.