

Sister Wives (Without the Mister) **By Tara Spinelli for Jersey Moms Blog**

When my son's soccer coach called from practice, I figured I must be late for pickup. Instead, our conversation went something like this:

Coach: Kai and Evan collided during practice and he's complaining that his ribs hurt.

Me: Which one?

Coach: Which rib?

Me: No, which kid?

Coach: Your son. That's why I'm calling you and not Evan's mom.

Me: Oh, of course. I'll be right over.

This little exchange made me laugh and reminded me that my *Sister Wives* approach to parenting (decidedly without the shared mister) isn't exactly an official norm.

Our coach knows Kai and Evan are buddies, but obviously wouldn't consider Evan's mom and me interchangeable when it comes to our kids. And while we're not that, we do have the other's back practically and psychologically, spotting each other on whatever comes up from the mundane to the existential. From the basics of providing transportation, homework help, and meals to the bigger picture of helping our kids become caring, smart, thoughtful, contributing members of society, we each play a role in the life of the other parent's child.

When my daughter was graduating from her groovy coop preschool, I made a lively pitch to the parents who had become my pals that we should continue on this rewarding-for-everyone path and establish our own homeschooling coop. What better way to give our kids the experience of learning we wanted for them AND get to work together in such a fun and meaningful way? Let's just say they laughed slightly less than when I explained how great I thought *Sister Wives* was as a model for family (if not marriage) in which everyone benefits from the collective talents and resources of not one but four moms.

Let's face it, we parents are not all good at the same things. We don't all like or hate the same aspects of parenting. We don't all have the same amount of time, energy, and attention to give at the same moments. But put us together, and you've got a powerful combination of skills, interests, and patience to give our kids what they need when they need it.

My practical, energy-saving, shortest-distance-between-two-points self thrills at the economies of combining forces. Call it Sister Wives. Call it the carpooling model of parenting. Call it crazy. All I know is, I need help and so do you. So why don't you get that copy of the homework both of our kids forgot while I drive them to soccer practice. And if the coach calls, just tell him one of us will be right over.