



Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a normal part of life and something that children will experience with siblings, peers, parents, and other adults. As parents, we can help support our children when they experience conflict and teach them the skills they can use to resolve conflict, now and in the future. Below are some tips to help you coach your child through a resolution process.

Learn to Identify and Manage Emotions

If your child is experiencing a conflict with someone, be prepared to help them manage strong emotions. When working with your child to identify feelings, you should recognize and name feelings and teach them it is okay to say how they feel. Children ages 3-5 years old need help linking the emotion they are feeling with feeling words. In addition, you should teach your child that it is not okay to hit, kick, or use physical force against themselves or anyone else.



Listen to Understand

Check in with your child and ask them, "What happened?" Listen to your child. Help them understand that when they express themselves in an appropriate way, they will be heard and understood. Practice good listening techniques. For example, eliminate other distractions, and look at your child when they are talking to you.



Problem Solve Together

Children ages 3-5 years old may need help finding possible solutions to the problems they are experiencing. Ask your child how they would like to solve the problem and then role-play potential scenarios. If your child has a hard time coming up with strategies to solve the issue, offer possible positive solutions. The key is to foster positive communication and joint problem-solving. Taking time to encourage these thinking skills now will help your child use this strategy in the future.

Empathy

Remember, the emotions your child is experiencing are very real. Be empathetic with your child when they are sharing their feelings. When your child is sharing their feelings, take the opportunity to teach them to be empathetic and ask them how others involved in the situation may feel. Remember the age and stage of your child. Looking at situations from another's point of view may be challenging for some children ages 3 to 5 years old.

Additional resources, skills, and strategies for parents are available at no cost through the online Thrive Initiative programming. Visit the Thrive website <https://thrive.psu.edu>, and sign up today!