



Conflict Resolution

Why is conflict resolution important?

Conflict resolution is important in early education because children learn how to listen to others. They become more aware of their needs, learn how to communicate their thoughts and feelings in a respectful way, and feel inspired to think creatively to search for solutions. It is important to provide young children with opportunities to work on their problem-solving skills and to offer gentle guidance and encouragement when they are struggling. Many times, adults want to solve problems for children, rather than letting them work on problem solving. Jumping in to solve the problem does not allow the child to discover they are capable of problem solving and hinders them from developing problem solving skills as they grow. An important skill for successful social interaction during the preschool years is being able to resolve conflicts.

When teachers and parents nurture the development of conflict resolution skills, they are providing the child with the ability to resolve situations before they spin out of control. These skills are essential for developing and maintaining relationships with others. How well these skills are learned during childhood will influence the type and quality of the relationships that the child forms throughout their life.

The 6 steps of conflict resolution are:

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
2. Acknowledge children's feelings.
3. Gather information.
4. Restate the problem.
5. Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.
6. Be prepared to give follow-up support.

At Green Garden, we...

Use conflict resolution in each of our classes, even with our youngest children in the infant classrooms. In the infant rooms, the teachers scaffold and provide the language for the children since they are nonverbal, but they still get the experience and learn problem solving skills so by the time they are toddlers and able to talk they are familiar with the process. Infants and toddlers learn through experience. Older children learn through trial and error.

As they get older, the children learn to resolve conflicts on their own with little to no help from teachers. In these classrooms the children have solution kits that they use as a resource when conflicts arise. These kits include suggestions for solutions to problems that are represented both by pictures and printed words so the children can use them on their own. Of course, if the children cannot resolve a conflict on their own the teachers are there to support and give them the tools to resolve it themselves.

These two children used conflict resolution tools teachers equip them with. Both children wanted the same notebook. One child suggested using the "solution kit". Without teacher intervention they decided they could take turns and set a timer so they would know when it was time to switch. After that they decided together to open up both pages of the book so they could each write in one side and use it at the same time.

