

# 10 Steps to Conflict Resolution With Kids

Taken from Heather Shumaker's "It's Ok Not to Share."

## 1. Help kids stop

Point out what you observe. Interpret words and body language. ("I see you putting your hands up. Do you want him to throw balls at you?")

Ask questions. ("Did you like it when he took your ball?")

## 2. Bring kids together

Kids need to be close enough to see and hear each other.

Bring back a child who runs away. ("You need to listen to Danny.") Get down at kid level. Touch, listen and look in their eyes. Support both kids.

## 3. Identify feelings

Empathize. Show you understand each child's feelings. ("You feel mad he broke your castle.") Suggest feelings. ("Are you feeling mad that he took your toy?") Be matter-of-fact. ("You didn't like that. You wish you could have this toy.")

## 4. Tell the right person--direct confrontation

Help kids face each other and speak directly to the other child. ("Tell her"/ "Tell him.") Give children exact words. ("Tell her: 'I don't like it when you hit me!'") Stay with them as they talk.

## 5. Listen to peers

Put the children in charge. Make sure each child knows he has to listen to the other child. Guide and support kids in this process.

## 6. Define the problem

Help kids be specific about limits. ("I hear you saying 'stop!' What do you want Alexander to stop doing?") State what the child doesn't like. Restate it in the child's own words. ("Benny says he didn't like it when you pushed him.")

## 7. Reinforce

Echo what the kids say. Echoing reinforces the message and makes it louder. Intervene, if necessary, to help a child stop or listen.

## 8. Problem solve

Ask: What could you do to solve this problem? Offer information. ("I know playing in the water you might get wet.") Offer ideas. ("I know sometimes kids make awaiting list. Do you want to try it?")

Help kids define limits and set them on other kids. ("Jessica says you can play with the train if you don't crash the track.")

### **9. Get a commitment**

Ask kids for a verbal agreement. ("Are you going to stop?") Or sign a written contract.

### **10. Put a solution into action**

Try the children's solution first. Problem solve again and try a new idea if it doesn't work.