

Beyond Classroom Conflict

Elementary Edition

Start Out Strong with Conflict Resolution



of school will allow you to make the most of your learning environment for the remainder of the year.

Bringing conflict into the open helps children by taking away some of the fear and mystery. Discussing responses gives children tools to use when faced by a situation with

another child. Creating vocabulary your class will use to deal with conflict will streamline the conversations you have when tensions are high.

Tips for creating an atmosphere for positive conflict resolution:

- Spend ten minutes a day for the first month discussing relationships and conflict resolution approaches. You will make this time back later in the year when you do not lose time investigating conflicts.
- Connect conflict in stories

you read to your class with reality. Ask children to comment on how characters reacted to conflict and the results of their actions. Relate this to problems encountered in school.

- Coach children on communicating through conflict. Telling a new friend “I don’t like it when you point at me” could stop a problem before it grows into a larger issue.
- After playing outside, ask if there were any conflicts. If children solved a problem appropriately, write their initials in a special place on the board. Congratulate them for practicing this important skill. Again, you are investing against losing 15 minutes trying to find out why children were fighting on the playground. If the fights do not happen, you do not lose time talking about them.

Use similar language about conflict when you talk to parents about problems in the classroom. Explain the communication you are encouraging and the benefits of teaching children to solve conflicts on their own.

and younger.

This approach builds important skills in the child, and brings benefits to the teacher. The complete press release is entitled, “Preschoolers Not Too Young to Develop the Skills of Conflict Resolution, Say HighScope Experts” and can be found at Highscope.org

The beginning of the year brings a fresh start: new students, new clothes, new pencils, new name plates. Avoid some of the new problems with a direct effort at conflict resolution. While teaching children routines and expectations, talk directly about conflict and appropriate responses.

Children are not expected to read until they are given a foundation. Children cannot resolve conflicts in a positive way unless they are shown how in a direct, formulated manner. Setting this tone the first month

Plan Your Approach

“Plan ahead” becomes a phrase that is probably muttered by teachers while they sleep. Planning how to resolve conflict is also essential for helping students work through problems.

Kathleen Woodard released a statement from the High Scope curriculum that outlined six steps created by Betsy Evans for

helping students navigate a conflict. “The steps 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; and (6) Be prepared to give follow-up support.” High Scope has found this approach to work with children age six

Volume 1, Issue 1
August 2009

Starting Out Strong 1

Nancy L. Nicewonger

Plan Your Approach 1

Nancy L. Nicewonger

Cultivate the Peacemakers 2

Nancy L. Nicewonger

Nancy Nicewonger can help your class move beyond conflict through:

- **Staff Development**
- **Teacher Training**
- **Parent Meetings**
- **Consultation**
- **Classroom activities**

www.beyondclassroomconflict.com

Beyond Classroom Conflict

Beyond Classroom Conflict
P.O Box 764
Locust, NC 28097

Phone: 704-918-8042

Email:

nancy@beyondclassroomconflict.com

Visit us on the Web:
Beyondclassroomconflict.com



An experienced teacher and administrator, Nancy Nicewonger has a desire to help children of all ages gain resources in conflict resolution that will stay with them for a lifetime of use.

After testing an approach to conflict resolution in both private and public school classrooms, Nancy created **Beyond Classroom Conflict** as a workshop for teachers. Teachers are given the tools to implement this approach with their students and families.

Nancy is also willing to serve as a mediator or consultant in order to help teachers transform their classroom into a positive culture of resolution. Nancy has a degree in elementary education as well as a Master's Degree in Conflict Resolution. Nancy can help your program make the most of your learning environment by establishing principles of conflict resolution.

Be aware of the bully but cultivate the peacemakers

As a class enters the first day of school, the teacher will begin the assessment. Who is the class leader? Where is the class clown? Who is the ideal student? Where is the bully? Often left out of this equation is the peacemaker. Also in the background is the fact that children can be cultivated during the year. Peacemakers can be groomed from all students within your classroom; from the leader, the reader and the athlete. Together, these students can make a difference.

Cultivate a new peacemaker by training the student to respond to conflicts without the assistance of an adult. Except for dangerous

situations, both emotionally and physically harmful, students can learn to respond. Coach students on a phrase that will move the conflict from breaking a bond to forming a bond between two students.

Groom children who already act as peacemakers by giving them more tools. Help them to assist others by knowing when to communicate and when to get the help of an adult. Use classroom discussions to talk about conflict so students can become sure of what approach to use. These students then become confident in resolution and can be a leader as they get older.



Give conflict resolution a mention each day. Give notice to their ability as peacemakers. Resolution then becomes a goal among students.

You will have a bully enter your classroom. A room of peacemakers will give the bully less of a foothold. This will then allow your room

to remain safe and focused on learning. Bullies cannot be ignored and allowed to rule. They do not, however, need to be the only focus. Consider the peacemakers that enter your room and the ones you can grow during the year. This approach will make your room a better place.