

Beyond Classroom Conflict

Family Edition

My Child Doesn't Do that At Home!

The CALL happens every year. The teacher calls a parent at home to talk about school. When the issue is outlined, the parent begins to bristle. This is not a description of the child they sent to school. The parent's response is:

My child knows how to share.

My child does not lie.

My child follows directions.

My child is kind to everyone.

This leads the parent to believe there must be a problem at school. While that is a possibility, how can a parent determine where the problem lies? Answering these questions can help a parent consider the teacher's concerns.

Is the situation at school relevant to home? If the child is having problems working in a large group, you would not be aware. It would be a new issue discovered at school.

Are there other children at home? If not, you would not be aware of how your child would share a space on a daily basis with other children.

Does your child need to be independent at home? If you quickly meet the needs of your child, he does not have to follow directions as he would at school.

Is the authority relationship the same? Do you put your child's needs first? Do you plan your day around your child? Do you meet your child's needs before he has to ask? Do you give your child a second chance if he ignores a direction

you give him? If yes, recognize that you are familiar with your child and will give allowance for behavior. A teacher at school will have different expectations of your child. You can expect differences in behavior between school and home.

How can you better respond to a teacher's concern?

Ask the teacher for detailed, factual reports of your child's behavior. A teacher may be willing to video your child so you can view the situation.

Try to visit the classroom without your child knowing so you can observe his behavior.

Ask the teacher what vocabulary is used in the classroom when dealing with conflict or in giving directions. Use similar language at home.

Give your child simple directions at home (set the table) and encourage him to complete the steps to the task.

Avoid making unsupportive comments about the teacher in front of your child.

Communicate on a regular basis with the teacher through a note or phone call.

In the end you may decide your child is not at fault. However, if your child is having difficulty at school, it is better to find out early in the year. By working with the teacher, you can ensure your child's success at school and foster a positive working relationship with the teacher.

Volume 1, Issue 3

October 2009

An experienced teacher and administrator, Nancy Nicewonger has a desire to help children and families gain skills 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 method of helping children of all ages deal appropriately and effectively with conflict. Her goal is that children and families will learn how to respond to conflict in a way that promotes growth and health rather than allowing it to damage relationships.

Nancy has a degree in elementary education as well as a Master's Degree in Conflict Resolution.

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P.O. Box 764
Locust, NC 28097

Phone: 704-918-8042

nancy@beyondclassroomconflict.com

Visit us on the Web:
beyondclassroomconflict.com