

Beyond Classroom Conflict

Family Edition

Parent-child Negotiation

A parenting website suggests allowing a child to negotiate with the parent over decisions the parent has made. This concept faces every family. Most children are not ready to leave the park. Few children are ready to turn off the television or put away the video games. There are factors to consider, though, when changing your decision because your child wants to negotiate.

Negotiation is difficult when one side has more power.

A parent should have more authority and power than the child. Because of this, some situations should not be negotiated. Instead, look for situations where there can be less of a power difference. For instance, allow children to choose from appropriate television programs. You still set the amount of time they may watch television. You will set an ending time. The child can choose which shows to watch within those parameters. They can discuss those decisions with you. They cannot negotiate watching 5 shows instead of the 2 you allowed. The parent has power over what is appropriate. The child has choices within that decision.

Negotiation should work toward a win-win solution.

If not leaving the park on time will make you late for an appointment, it cannot be negotiated. At another time, though, you may announce a restaurant choice for lunch when your child makes another suggestion. If your child's choice will work just as well for both of you then you can negotiate with your child.

This seems the same as giving your child a choice. The difference is that your child is suggesting the choice. Throwing a temper tantrum that will get you to change your mind is not negotiating. It is not a win-win situation and your child now has the power in the situation. Instead, learn when to discuss a decision with your child and when you should not. Eventually, you will avoid conflicts and resolve them with your child by following these guidelines consistently.

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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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