

Helping resolve conflict: Suggestions for school staff

Children may get into conflicts at school for a range of reasons

Providing support and guidance in conflict resolution helps children learn the social and emotional skills they need to get on effectively with others. Conflict resolution also provides teaching staff with a very effective tool to deal with social problems that can interfere with children's learning in class and to help identify when there are underlying concerns, such as problems with learning, that need to be addressed.



Guiding children in the steps of conflict resolution

The following example shows how guiding children in the steps of conflict resolution can help to reinforce effective social skills for the classroom.

Mira:	"He took my crayon."	
Teacher:	"I'm sure we can work this out. Tell me what the problem is – Mira? Ben?"	Sets the stage for win-win outcomes
Mira:	"I was using that one."	
Ben:	"I needed that colour and she put it down."	
Teacher:	"So you both wanted to use the same colour. How is that a problem for you?"	Asks children to describe their concerns
Mira:	"I want to finish my picture and I can't because Ben took the crayon."	
Ben:	"I'm worried that she'll use it all up before I get a turn. And I really need the orange one."	
Teacher:	"I see. You both want to use orange in your pictures. Mira, you want to finish your picture, and Ben, you're worried that the crayon will get used up before you get a turn with it." "Can you think of any ways that we could sort this out?"	Shows understanding Asks for solutions
Ben:	"Mira could use yellow so I can have the orange one."	
Mira:	"I could show Ben what I want to use the orange for so he can see I won't use it all up."	
Ben:	"We can take it in turns. She can use the orange one for a bit while I use the purple. Then we can swap."	
Teacher:	"Which idea do you think would work best in our sharing classroom?"	Helps children choose an option
Ben and Mira:	"Taking turns."	
Teacher:	"Sounds good. Let's give it a go."	Praises and supports

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