Resolving Conflicts

Try these conflict resolution steps to help children work through difficult situations. This approach is based on six simple mediation steps that you can use with children when they are upset, angry or agitated.

**Approach children calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.** A deliberate calmness and soothing voice will get children’s cooperation more effectively than rushing into the situation with a raised voice. Firmly stop anyone from hurting or getting hurt.

**Acknowledge children’s feelings.** When you label and describe their feelings, you acknowledge their right to have these feelings and help them begin to identify them.

**Gather information.** Gentle questioning about what happened will help children describe or ‘voice’ the situation. It is important not to ‘grill’ children, but to create the space for everyone to have a chance to speak.

**Restate the problem.** In a neutral way, reflect back to children what you understand about the problem.

**Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together.** Listen equally to all suggestions and work together to choose one that works for everyone.

**Be prepared to give follow-up support.** As you know, children will need you to stay close at hand to be sure that their suggestions are followed. Give lots of positive praise!