

5

Steps to Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Restore Connection ~ Return to Peace

First, DECIDE!

What kind of challenge is this?

Emergency Response Assessment

SKILL Is this a developmentally appropriate reaction which requires more time and patience to mature into acceptable behavior? Does your child need more skill practice before s/he can master this expectation alone?

STRESS Is your child holding stored stress and tension which is causing rigid behaviors, inflexibility or aggression? Does your child need more coping tools or creative channels to offload stuck emotions and anxiety?

STATE OF THE RELATIONSHIP Is this a relationship issue where the connection has been lost due to previous conflicts and harsh interactions? Do you need to repair and restore attachments before you can see growth?

Find the root cause of negative behavior by understanding what's driving it.

Then, ACT!

T

1. Take a BREATH and Notice

Breathe in for 4 seconds and out for 8. Slow your breath on the exhale to activate your parasympathetic nervous system and relax your mind and body. Then, notice and name what you see happening. Invite connection with a non-judgmental inquiry or a non-evaluative observation.

E

2. Engage and Empathize

Approach the situation with curiosity to help your child's brain rest and reset. New choices cannot be made until your child feels calm and connected. Empathize with your child's experience by validating his/her level of skill, source of stress or any disconnections that may have occurred.

A

3. Acknowledge Needs

Acknowledge your child's core need. Needs and feelings drive behavior. Children can better manage their behaviors when they know their needs and feelings are important and valid. Honoring needs stimulates the thinking part of the brain, strengthening the empathy circuits.

C

4. Connect to Problem Solve

Ask for ideas, and allow children to lead the conflict resolution with your guidance. Suggest solutions or alternatives where appropriate. Peaceful solutions and resolutions are easier to access when you feel connected and calm. Don't move to this step until you've had your T-E-A.

H

5. Help Your Child Grow

Help your child develop better skills by holding the boundaries with loving kindness and modeling your own mindful tools. Staying present and matter-of-fact can replace an angry tone or a disengaged demand. Learning is social and emotional and your child's behavior is shaped - not by what you say - but by how you act.

Be Conscious!

Take a BREATH and Notice

It looks like you're having trouble.
Tell me more about your idea.
I can tell by your voice that you're feeling angry.
You don't seem like yourself.
I'm here if you want to talk.
I noticed you've been quiet. I'm wondering what's up?
You seem stuck. I'm wondering if I can help.
I won't let you hurt each other but I'm curious about what led to this.

Engage and Empathize

It's hard to wait. You want a turn so badly.
Your idea is important. Would you be willing to share?
You're feeling frustrated. Would you be willing to share?
It's ok to be upset. It's sad when we leave our friends.
It feels hurtful when people take things from you.
It must be difficult to be excluded from your friends.
You don't want to leave the park, you're having fun.
I am hearing how unfair you think this is.
It's normal to feel angry when something like this happens.

Acknowledge Needs

You wanted to play with your sister and she said, "No."
You'd really like my full attention.
You hoped to be included and asked to play too.
You'd appreciate it if your privacy was respected.
You didn't feel considered. You wanted to finish.
You'd like to be respected by your friends.
You wanted me to listen and hear what you said.
I see how strongly you feel about this.
It must be difficult to focus with all this distraction.

Connect to Problem Solve

Your friend looks sad. What could we do to help?
You both want to use this. How can we do this out?
Do you have any ideas of what you could do next time?
I'm wondering how your sister is feeling?
That wasn't what you were expecting. What do you think went wrong?
What's your suggestion for solving this?
That doesn't work for me. Would you be willing to...?
You made a mistake. Let's try again.

Help Your Child Grow

We have to give the toy back. Would you like to do it or do you need my help?
I'm going to put the game away so you're not tempted to play it before you finish your homework.
I won't let you throw, but I'll help you get the mad out.
When you want to hit, clap your hands or stomp your feet like this (model it).
If you feel worried, take some deep breaths like you're blowing up a balloon (model it).
When I feel things are unfair, I like to journal about it.
Jumping jacks help me shake out nervous feelings
Let's take some time to cool off and come back to discuss this after dinner.

