

Helping kids handle conflict

Dealing with conflict is not only stressful for kids, but parents too. We've got some tips to help you support your child to handle conflict better.



Conflict is a normal part of kids' lives

Learning to work out troubles is an important life lesson for kids

Kids who know how to manage conflict are happier, have healthy friendships and learn better at school.

How well kids are able to resolve conflict is related to their age, stage of development and life experiences.

We've got some tips to help you support your child at any age to become better at managing and resolving conflicts with others.

Ideas to assist your child to deal with conflict

Here's how you can help your child handle conflict better:

Be a positive role model – Kids learn about resolving conflict by observing others.

Create a safe environment – Allow them to express themselves openly and honestly without fear of a negative or emotional reaction.

Teach them strategies to calm down – Such as deep breathing, relaxation, exercise, writing, drawing, painting or other expressive activities.

Work out how they feel – Talk it over to help them identify and process their feelings.

Help them manage their feelings – Help your child find ways to manage their feelings in the moment such as counting to 10 or walking away.

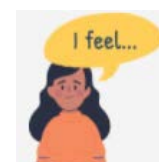
Work out what they want – Help them to understand their own needs or motivations.

Encourage empathy – Help them to figure out what the other child wants and how they might be feeling.

Teaching effective communication skills

Here are some skills that can help your child communicate more effectively during a conflict:

Using "I" statements to express feelings - "I feel ____ when ____"



Avoiding name calling, hurtful words or acting on emotions



Talking about the problem openly and directly with the other person



Listening carefully to others – making eye contact, no interrupting



Understanding others - repeating back what the other person has said



Being kind - it's hard to fight in the face of kindness



Building problem solving skills

Once kids have expressed and understood what the problem is, you can support them to work it out. Together with your child:

- Brainstorm a big list of solutions
- Help them think of different ways to solve the problem
- Talk about being flexible and making room for compromise
- Aim for a win-win solution – something that is fair for everyone
- Help them agree on a solution and be willing to give it a go
- Support them to think of possible consequences of solution
- Put the solution into action and see how it works

Helping kids to handle conflict can be stressful

There is help available for you and your child

Encourage your child to connect with [Kids Helpline](https://kids-helpline.com.au) (Ph: 1800 55 1800) if they need some extra support to handle conflict.

If you need some support to help your kids handle conflict, call NSW [Parent Line](https://parentline.nsw.gov.au) (Ph: 1300 1300 52) and talk through your options with a counsellor.

This article by Kids Helpline can be accessed online: <https://kids-helpline.com.au/parents/issues/helping-kids-handle-conflict>