

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET #36: Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they seek to resolve conflict nonviolently.

45%

*of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.**

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Peaceful conflict resolution" is one of five social-competencies assets.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 2,17,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

7 Steps to Making Peace

"Children who learn how to think about their relationships with other people do better in life in general," says Myrna B. Shure, Ph.D., a developmental psychologist. Shure created the I Can Problem Solve (ICPS) program, which focuses on the thinking skills needed for young people to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Shure suggests that before young people begin discussing a specific conflict, they find out if the time and place are good for the discussion. If so, they can begin the seven-step process. If not, they should identify a time and place that work for everyone involved. Next:

- 1.** Identify the conflict. Have each person talk about what happened. Each person's account is equally important.
- 2.** Talk about the events that led to the conflict. What happened first? Second? What increased the conflict?
- 3.** Name how you feel. Ask others involved to identify how they feel. Encourage people to be honest about how they feel without blaming others.
- 4.** Listen carefully to each person's feelings and accounts of the conflict. Use empathy skills. Try to understand each person's point of view.
- 5.** Brainstorm solutions. Be creative. Affirm each person's ideas but keep encouraging people to think of different solutions.
- 6.** Evaluate each solution. Choose one solution that everyone agrees on.



- 7.** Monitor how the solution works. If something needs to change, start again.

"If children can learn to solve typical everyday problems, they are less likely to become impulsive, insensitive, withdrawn, aggressive, or antisocial," Shure says. "In the long run it is important for children to learn how to think about the problems they encounter in their dealings with other people."

Helpful Hints

Tips that make peaceful conflict resolution easier:

- **Have everyone involved honestly state their needs and wants without blaming others.**
- **Have everyone listen, listen, listen, and try to understand each other.**
- **Stay focused on the conflict at hand; do not bring up other conflicts.**
- **Emphasize creative problem solving and creating new solutions.**
- **Negotiate until a win-win result is found.**

time together

Three ways to improve peaceful conflict resolution with your child:

1. Set up a specific place in your home for peacemaking. For example, you might identify a certain room for family members to resolve conflicts. In this room, you might require that people use respectful words and take turns talking and listening.
2. When conflicts occur at home, use author William Kreidler's approach: **CAPS**. **C**ool off. **A**gree to work it out. **P**oint out your view. **S**olve the problem.
3. Admit when you've responded poorly to conflict. Apologize. Suggest new ways to solve the conflict.

Quick Tip:
Don't avoid
conflict, but
resolve it
peacefully.

talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- What is your initial reaction when you're in a conflict with someone? Why?
- Which conflicts in your past have had outcomes that pleased you? Why?
- How do caring, courage, forgiveness, justice, and unity relate to how we choose to handle conflict?

Become a Peacemaker

Consider forming a peace club. For more information, contact:

**Children as the Peacemakers
Peace Clubs**
1177 California St., Suite 1432
San Francisco, CA 94108

More Help for Parents

Raising a Thinking Child: Help Your Young Child to Resolve Everyday Conflicts and Get Along with Others by Myrna B. Shure et al. presents techniques for teaching children up to age 7 how to solve problems nonviolently. (Published by Pocket Books.)

Peace Patrol by Diane Schilling, ed. This book teaches young people step-by-step peaceful conflict resolution skills. (Published by Innerchoice.)

Final Word

"Go and talk things over. Words can do magic."
—Leo Lionni

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