Work It Out with Words

Pause, use words, and look for a better solution.

Helps Your Child Grow



Relationships with Other Children

Supporting your child to calm down, express feelings, negotiate a solution, and seek help strengthens conflict-resolution skills and supports more stable peer relationships.

Steps

- Small conflicts are a normal part of friendship. When neither child wants to give in and an argument grows, how can you help your child respond more effectively?
- Avoid immediately solving the problem for your child. First invite them to explain: “Tell me what happened.” Acknowledge their feelings: “You felt upset when they grabbed the toy.” Then state the boundary without assigning blame: “Grabbing isn’t okay. Let’s think about what you can do next.”
- Think through possible solutions together: “They may really want a turn. Could they use it after you finish, or could you trade toys for a while?”
- When your child works through a conflict on their own, they gain valuable experience handling disagreements.
- If the argument escalates and your child cannot resolve it, step in directly - for example, separate them briefly or talk with the other caregiver.
- Model the language you want your child to use during your own disagreements: “I don’t like this. Can we think of a better solution together?”

Tips

- Your child learns from the way adults handle conflict. The more calmly you respond, the easier it is for your child to learn a constructive pattern.

Observations

- ◯ Tries to express their ideas during a conflict with another child
- ◯ Retells what happened and discusses possible solutions