

# Conflict Resolution: Ten Helpful Hints

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1. **BE CALM:** If you're too angry, get another adult to deal with the situation (count to 10...or 100!)
2. **BE FIRM:** You must follow through-do what you say you are going to, mean what you say! This means you must be careful what you use as a consequence, because you must do it if you have to.
3. **BE CONSISTENT:** Each child and action is treated equally. Children focus on "fairness" and will know if you "play favorites."
4. **DISCIPLINE CLOSE-UP:** Don't shout; move close when you deal with situations. It is between you and the child, not a "public" display.
5. **ACKNOWLEDGE ANGER:** Let the child know that **you** understand they are angry, but they are going to do as you request. Respect and honor their feelings, and let them know that you do. Don't be surprised if they stay mad at you-you may have to wait awhile to talk things out.
6. **LET KIDS "SAVE FACE":** Talk privately, allow **them** to choose and carry out consequences, avoid a "public scene" where they must engage in a power struggle with you to avoid looking bad to others.
7. **LISTEN:** Avoid arguments about behavior; let the child express their opinion, state yours, and follow through as you need to; if you have to act fast and don't have time to listen, find time later and explain what you did. Talk about why you had to act fast, and be willing to **listen** to the child.
8. **HEAR BOTH SIDES:** When possible, listen to all sides, try and stay objective and fair; possibly have older children write out their views. Avoid siding with a "good kid" against one with a "reputation."
9. **EXPLAIN PERSONAL CONSEQUENCES:** Explain negative social consequences of being labeled as a bully or liar; how other children may not want to play with them. Give them a **personal investment** in changing their behavior.
10. **DON'T MAKE THEM WRONG:** Enforce consequences of behavior, but avoid forcing apologies or admissions of guilt, especially while the child is angry. Making a child apologize when he is not sorry only forces him to lie and cover up his feelings. Later, when the child is calm, talk things over. Apologies should be **voluntary**.

## HOW CAN YOU DEAL WITH CONFLICT?

### Steps a child can take to deal with conflict

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Give In                     | 7. Talk it Over |
| 2. Humor (tell a joke)         | 8. Share        |
| 3. Chance (flip a coin)        | 9. Compromise   |
| 4. Explain                     | 10. Apologize   |
| 5. Leave (walk away)           | 11. Take Turns  |
| 6. Distract (another activity) | 12. Get Help    |