



GLOBAL CENTER

for the Development of *the Whole Child*

According to CASEL (2013), “responsible decision-making is the ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behaviors and social interactions. These choices are based on a consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.”

Try these activities with the children in your life to foster their responsible decision-making.

ACTIVITY ONE:

Teaching your children how to solve conflicts is an important skill that will benefit them for the rest of their lives. Using books as a catalyst to introduce this skill can allow discussions around conflict resolution to be memorable, relatable, and applicable. Being able to harness some classic stories and incorporating guided questions while reading to or with your child will help in building this vital skill.

To begin set aside some time and allow your child to select a book such as *The Story of Ferdinand*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *Mira and the Big Story*, *Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type*, or *Little Red Riding Hood*.

As you read the story aloud to your child, ask them the following questions:

1. What is the main conflict in this story?
2. How do you think each character feels about the conflict?
3. What do the main characters want to happen?
4. How can the characters work together to solve the problem?
5. How can you use the lesson from this story in your everyday life?
6. Then, have your children share about times when, like the characters in the story, they felt at odds with another person. Ask them how they worked together with that person to make the situation better.

ACTIVITY TWO:

Practicing how to argue fairly helps a child learn how to get their point across without offending others or being excessively angry, abusive, or disrespectful. With the help of their parents, children are able to understand their emotions and how they affect the way they process a conflict.

Learning rules and strategies in the midst of a conflict can help your child realize how their actions affect others. Carve out some time to sit with your child and create or go over rules/expectations for solving conflicts within your household. You can use the below as a guide:

When dealing with conflicts we must first:

1. Identify the problem
2. Focus on the problem and remember not to attack the person
3. Make sure to listen to each other
4. Treat each other's feelings with respect
5. Take responsibility for your actions
6. Find a way to compromise

Now after going over and agreeing to the rules, read the story "The Zax" from Dr. Seuss's book *The Sneetches and Other Stories*. After reading the story, ask your child:

1. What was the main conflict in the story?
2. How did the two characters treat each other?
3. What made the conflict get worse?
4. What strategies could the two characters use to help solve their conflict?

Remember to use this opportunity to help children understand that productive arguments and even conflicts are good and can bring us closer when handled well.

ACTIVITY THREE:

Learning to work through conflicts or adapt to undesirable situations is an essential skill that will not only help your child now but also well into adulthood. Practicing how to analyze and solve conflicts effectively helps your child to understand the people around them and how conflict, when handled well, can help bring individuals closer.

Using a set of blank flash cards, write problem-solving scenarios on individual cards. Shuffle the cards and allow your child to select and share their potential solutions to each possible scenario. Afterwards stop and discuss your child's choice and why they felt it was the best solution for that situation.

Here are a few problem-solving scenarios to help you get started:

1. Someone in your class has something you want. What do you do?
2. While playing with your little brother, he accidentally breaks your favorite toy. What do you do next?
3. You are talking to someone, but they are not listening to you. What do you do?
4. You see a new girl eating by herself in the cafeteria. What do you say to her?
5. You ask your parent for something and he/she says no. How do you respond?