

Conflict Resolution Education in Early Childhood Development

Carole Guerin

Calguerin@email.com

(617) 785-7129

Masters Candidate

University of Massachusetts, Boston

Program in Dispute Resolution

August 2009

ABSTRACT

Teaching children to approach conflict constructively is possibly one of the greatest skills a parent or caregiver can encourage to help a child navigate life successfully. In the field of Conflict Resolution theories and practices have been developed that successfully assist in using conflict's potential to create positive change and to build healthy relationships. The aim of this study is to discover what resources are presently available for parents/caregivers and their children from birth to pre school age and what efforts are being made to educate this population in the skills of conflict management. I suggest children's literature as a method of reaching this audience.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	5
II.	Why Start Young : Literature Review	8
	A. Early Childhood Development literature	8
	B. Early Brain Development Literature	13
	C. Social Emotional Intelligence Literature	17
III.	Pre School Setting Conflict Resolution Programs and Curriculums	19
IV.	What Parents can do to Support Healthy Emotional Development in Early Childhood	25
V.	Storytelling	31
VI.	Conflict Resolution Theory Content for Children’s Literature	34
VII.	Conflict Resolution Theory for Parents and Caregivers	38
	Talking with children about conflict	45
VIII.	Conclusion	49
IX.	References	51
	Appendix I. List of Books that demonstrate Conflict Resolution Behaviors	53
	Appendix II. Conflict Resolution Curriculums	56
	Appendix III. Conflict Resolution Organizations	57
	Appendix IV. Storytelling for Children	58
	Appendix V. The Story of Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, Retold Through Negotiation (Crawford, Bodine,& Schrupf. 1994.)	61

“We are no longer in a time where the primary goal of the Conflict Resolution field is to convince people of its importance. Our current task is to create an approach to conflict resolution education that sets new standards of excellence. The goal is movement toward changing the school or community culture by establishing a critical mass of teachers, community members, and youth who practice Conflict resolution and peacemaking to live day- to- day in civil association with all others. The 21st century will present a unique combination of necessity and interest in (1) creating new models for resolving conflict in our increasingly diverse population and (2) coordinating our efforts toward building a friendly community on our small planet.”

(Bodine & Crawford, 1996)

I. Introduction

The field of Conflict Resolution is vast and there are countless ways that we can contribute to using conflict constructively as a tool for transformation. Though the field is often thought of in terms of reducing violent conflict or transforming difficult conflicts, there is a third aspect of preventing unnecessary harm from potential conflict by educating participants in the skills of conflict management. The next step for the knowledge we have gained in the past 40 years of theory and practice may likely be a shift in culture toward integrating cooperative communication and creative conflict resolution into society's norms. One of our tasks, I believe, is to be teachers of conflict management. In fact, I believe we should start in early childhood by communicating what we now know about the productive uses of conflict and the development of the essential attitudes and understandings which promote cooperative behaviors, creative problem solving and peaceful coexistence to parents/ caregivers and their children.

John Burton suggested in 1996:

“There have now been thirty years of appropriate theory development and exploratory practice, and there are many student texts. But conflict and violence are of general concern, not just that of a few specialists. On the contrary, until specialists manage to communicate their thinking, and unless this alternative approach becomes a consensus, their goals will not be achieved.”(p.5)

As an educator, I approach this project with the aim of taking dispute resolution theory and making it accessible to young children and their care givers. This is not a new idea,

in fact, much of the literature regarding conflict resolution education for pre- school was written in the 1980's and 1990's.¹ Although there has been great progress in our American school systems in regard to 'peaceable classrooms' format, conflict resolution curriculums and also peer mediation programs in elementary, middle, and high schools, little contact has been made to children from birth to pre-school and their caregivers. Reaching this audience has its challenges, which is probably why most conflict resolution programs are in organizational settings such as daycare or classrooms. However, I believe children's literature is a bridge which can reach this audience at home as well as in more formal settings.

My aim in this project is, not to make preschool children mediators or negotiators, rather to highlight the opportunity parents of young children have to lay the foundations for constructive problem solving behaviors in young children. This can be done by helping the child's world view include hopeful problem solving strategies. I am focusing on children birth to pre school age and their care givers because the time from birth to pre school age is developmentally very important for laying the foundational capabilities of social, emotional, and coping behaviors. (Berk,2001; Elias,2007; Perry,2002; Saarni,2007, Shonkoff, 2000). Also, many of the skills conflict resolution theory presents apply also to school readiness skills which are necessary for our classrooms to function well and for students to be able to function using cooperative social behaviors.

¹ Bodine(1996), Carlsson-Paige(1998), Crawford(1996), Derman-Sparks(1989),Fitzell(1997), Henley(1997),Kriedler(1994), Prutzman(1988), Wichert(1989)

I have begun this project by explaining the relevance of my research to the field of Conflict Resolution. I then look into why it is important or even possible to teach young children foundational precursors to creative problem solving and cooperative behaviors. I then look at research on early childhood development as well as early brain development in regard to the child's capacity to utilize conflict resolution skills and behaviors.

Throughout the entire project the parent /caregiver is addressed because the child learns behavior and skills from the caregiver's behavior modeling and encouragement. So, in a way, I am suggesting parents and caregivers of young children become familiar with conflict resolution skills in order to instill them to the child. Because one of the primary activities for a child from birth to preschool is having stories read and told to them, I am taking conflict resolution theory and suggesting a framework/content for children's literature so that the caregiver and the child can learn creative problem solving together.

In this study, I propose to research what kind of Conflict Resolution literature and materials are available for preschool children and their caregivers and also what affects have been presented thus far. I will be using literature from the fields of: Dispute Resolution, Negotiation, Social-Emotional Intelligence, and Early Childhood Development.

II. Why Start Young;

A. Early Childhood Development Literature

Child development literature shows that children develop essential skills in the first few years of life which can be encouraged and supported by their caregivers. Caregivers who provide supportive environments to and who engage in meaningful dialogue with promote successful adaptive and communication skills in young children. The study: 'From Neurons to Neighborhoods, The Science of Early Childhood Development' by the National Academy of Sciences² is a study, conducted over 2 ½ years, on the current science of Early Childhood Development. This study had a committee of scholars from top institutions and child development experts from across the United States who reviewed all the research we have collected thus far in the past 50 years of researching childhood development.

The committee's first conclusion is this:

'From birth to age 5, children rapidly develop foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds. In addition to their remarkable linguistic and cognitive gains, they exhibit dramatic progress in their emotional, social, regulatory, and moral capacities. All of these critical dimensions of early development are intertwined, and each requires focused attention' (Shonkoff, pg.5).

² The National Academy of Sciences is a 'society of distinguished scholars with the mandate to advise the United States Federal government on scientific and technical matters' since the year 1863. In 1916, the academy organized the National Research Council as the principal operating agency to provide services to the government, the general public, and the scientific and engineering communities.(Program Report, p1)_Shonkoff &Phillips,2000)

These ‘foundational capabilities’ are what determine a person’s ability to navigate life successfully. Many of these foundational and coping abilities are the same tools needed in conflict resolution and determine whether conflict is dealt with in a constructive or destructive manner.

The committee recommends:

‘Resources on a par with those focused on literacy and numerical skills should be devoted to ***translating the knowledge base*** on young children’s emotional, regulatory, and social development into effective strategies for fostering: 1) The development of curiosity, self direction, and persistence in learning situations 2) ***The ability to cooperate, demonstrate caring, and resolve conflict with peers*** and 3) The capacity to experience the enhanced motivation associated with feeling competent and loved.” (Shonkoff, pg.5)

The research on early childhood development suggests we start in early childhood developing these core capabilities. ‘Translating this knowledge base’ is what I am suggesting by creating children’s literature with conflict resolution theory woven into the stories. Fostering the development of these qualities should begin at the start of a child’s life. Empathy, active listening, constructive responses to conflict, viewing conflict as a joint problem to be solved, and brainstorming multiple solutions are a few examples of the abilities that the stories can reflect to address the ability to cooperate , demonstrate caring, and resolve conflict with peers.

Constructive responses to conflict require self awareness as well as self control. In early development literature this skill is referred to as self regulation. In their chapter on the

importance of developing self-regulation skills in early childhood, Shonkoff et al.(2000) point to the development of the capacity to manage emotions effectively as key in developing healthy self regulation abilities.

“Children increasingly develop the ability to regulate their reactions, particularly in supportive environments. To reiterate one of our core concepts, development may be viewed as an increasing capacity for self-regulation, seen particularly in the child's ability to function more independently in a personal and social context.”(Shonkoff, p94)

Providing the experiences that allow children to take over and self-regulate in one aspect of their lives after another is a very general description of the job that parents, teachers, and protectors of children do that extends throughout early childhood and into the adolescent years (Shonkoff et al.). They further suggest the first step in the earliest days of children's lives is to establish regulatory connections with them and then gradually shift the responsibility of regulation over to them in the day-to-day domains of sleeping, waking, and soothing (p.95). Throughout these ‘day to day domains’ a caregiver naturally uses, or can use, reading, storytelling and dialogue to help the child understand and develop their own capabilities at accepting feelings and emotions as a valid part of life experience and learn to manage them successfully. Supporting a child’s emotional development is key in creating an environment where a child can cope successfully with the stress and conflict of regulating daily life.

Meaningful dialogue with children provides the experience of exploring feelings and responses to feelings without being ashamed or frightened. While reading and telling

stories to children, caregivers can talk about the difficulties the characters experience in the stories and the array of feelings and coping strategies that can be used. Shonkoff et al. continue: “emotions are, in short, one of the most ancient and enduring features of human functioning, and they develop significantly during the first years of life in the context of social interactions and relationships” (p. 106-107). This, again, speaks to the development of conflict resolution skills which promote healthy communication, identifies emotions and interests, and preserves relationships.

Parents who discuss emotions more frequently and elaborate on emotional experiences, (ex: “I felt a little sad when I called you and you didn’t answer”; “how do you think Sammy felt when Bob grabbed his boat?” “What could we do to cheer up Annie?”) tend to have children with more accurate and elaborated understandings of emotion (Brown and Dunn, 1996; Brown et al., 1996; Denham, 1998; Denham et al., 1994; Dunn, 1994; Dunn et al., 1991; Nelson, 1993, 1996)(p110). While reading books or telling stories to children, their understanding of perspectives and options can be enhanced by talking about the characters’ emotions, reactions and choices.

Research shows that family discourse is pivotal for a child’s acquisition of emotional descriptive language (Saarni, 2007). When parents have meaningful dialogue with their children it helps the children make sense of their world, gives them the vocabulary to express their perceptions and feelings, and makes them better communicators.

Saarni (2007), in her chapter on “The development of Emotional Competence: Pathways for helping children to become Emotionally Intelligent” continues:

“What promotes children’s social competence and their parallel understanding of other’s emotional experience appears to be family life that is supportive of the children’s developing awareness of their own emotions. The children are not mocked for expressing the vulnerable emotions of sadness and fear. Supportive parents talk about emotions, model the appropriate self-regulation when they themselves experience strong affect, and do not invalidate or dismiss their own or their children’s feelings (Gottman et al;1998).
(p23-24)

In my experience teaching in the Boston Public Schools (k-6), it is clear that students who have not developed foundational capabilities before they enter the classroom, experience difficulty participating in the most basic of activities. In fact, in many instances I must begin with teaching basic self control such as sitting in personal space, breathing and relaxing the body, proper posture and gaining control of one’s self before I can begin teaching the topic at hand. Parents who teach their children the ability to listen, follow direction, communicate and regulate their emotions give them a great advantage in the school setting. Otherwise, it is left to the teachers to try to teach these important foundational abilities while also addressing required curricula.

The 'Neurons to Neighborhoods study' further remarks:

'It is the strong conviction of this committee that the nation has not capitalized sufficiently on the knowledge that has been gained from nearly a half century of considerable public investment in research on children from birth to age 5. In many respects, we have barely begun to use our growing research capabilities to help children and families negotiate the changing demands of the 21st century' (p. 3)

These findings and recommendations by the National Research Council, nine years ago, have still not been fully realized. Throughout my research and reading, I have found that the progress made in the field of conflict resolution theory and practice for the past forty years has also not been sufficiently realized or communicated to the general public in a way that has been useful on the individual or family level, the basic units of society. Cooperative problem solving and appreciation of lively controversy remain topics of relatively low recognition. It is my hope that we are moving toward implementing these recommendations to a fuller extent. Teaching parents of young children to teach them the skills to problem solve and self regulate is key to helping children along the stepping stones toward independent social behavior.

Educating parents and caregivers is a logical way to increase greater participation in the development of healthy human behavioral skills in pre- school children and to support the understanding of conflict as a mutual problem to be solved in order to increase peaceful coexistence in the family, the neighborhood, society, and the world.

B. Literature on Early Brain Development in Children

When so much of our experience before the age of 4 or 5 years is deep in our unconsciousness and difficult to remember, one may wonder: what is the use of introducing conflict resolution with toddlers and preschoolers?

Recent developments in brain research show that in the first two years of life our brains develop at twice the rate of any time in our future development. Research also shows that our brains develop ‘branches’ into which information is filtered and perceived. The more ‘healthy’ branches we develop when we are young, the easier it becomes for us to cope and respond to life as adults. In other words, it is much easier to develop these ‘branches’ and to learn and integrate healthy behaviors at the start of our development than it is to incorporate new and better behaviors over dysfunctional ones we may have already developed. (Hart 2008)

Current research on the developing human brain has determined that our brains develop as a result of both conscious and unconscious stimulation and experiences. Our brains are constantly processing our perceptions. With repetition of experiences, we form connections and responses to the input. If those stimuli stop, our brains have the ability to ‘prune’ the branches that are not being used and grow new ones. This happens until around the age of three years. After that, it still happens but not as dramatically as when the structure of our brain processes are forming.

Another important discovery is that there are ‘critical periods’ in which development takes place in the brain, windows of opportunity in which skills can be developed. It

becomes more difficult or impossible for such rapid development in later years. Research has shown that for motor, sensory, and (in humans) language skills to develop normally, animals and humans alike must be exposed to specific experiences at optimal times during development. While this theory has advocates and opposition (see Bruer 1998, Goldman, Rakic & Buergeois, 1977), it is clear that learning coping skills during childhood facilitates social and emotional development.

Dr. Susan Hart, in her 2008 book: Brain, Attachment, Personality, remarks:

“The general consensus now is that the growth of specific brain structures takes place during critical periods in infancy, that brain development relies on stimulation and experiences, and that it is shaped by the person’s social environment. Brain development is driven by environmental influences, and this implies that a lack of relevant experiences may have lasting influence on brain development (p.53).

What this means is that every time your brain perceives something, an imprint is developed which, if repeated, becomes a channel into which information is perceived. Repetition of experiences leads to the formation of neural pathways that endure, but can also be stimulated by new experiences, thereby influencing how individuals perceive new information. When information or activities are familiar the information can flow through the neural pathways and the brain can make sense of the information easier. In relation to conflict resolution, I am suggesting that if a child is exposed to cooperative behaviors and creative problem solving thought processes, then their brain will develop neural pathways that are more likely to engage in that way in future situations.

Neurons are constantly affected by impulses from thousands of other neurons and, in turn, affect thousands of other neurons etc. Through this activity millions of neurons are inter connected in vast networks that form the basis for all brain processes. Neurons that begin to fire in close temporal sequence, for example due to outside influences, become connected with each time they are activated in the same pattern, either simultaneously, or in short order, the bond between them grows stronger, and the likelihood that they will fire together next time is increased..this is the underlying mechanism of all learning and the basis of Hebb's(1949) axiom that 'neurons that fire together wire together'..increasing co ordination means increasing influence on the shaping of a particular skill' (Hart, p45-46)

In the 'Neurons to Neighborhood' study, Shonkoff et al. support this idea:

“These neurobiological changes are consistent with the common observation that, between birth and age 6, children become increasingly proficient at exercising self-control and applying rules consistently to their own behavior, whether this is manifested in their success at “Simon Says,” their ability to wait for a cookie, their capacity to remain quiet and still during religious services”(pg. 95-96).

Waiting until a baby matures into a child to introduce what is required to cope successfully/constructively with conflict misses an opportunity to hard wire or at least make familiar these skills into the developing personality and brain mechanism. Parents have an opportunity to help their child's developing brain by understanding the stages of development children experience and by supporting the child's abilities toward self regulated behavior. For example when a toddler fusses at a transition time, using a

pleasant distraction such as music to move them through instead of dryly insisting they transition creates less conflict and more cooperative behavior.

The debate over Nature vs. Nurture has become less of an ‘either - or’ and more of a ‘both - and’. Brain development is driven by environmental influences, therefore what an infant and child experiences paves the way for future behaviors and thought processes.

Perry (2002) states “While experience may alter the behavior of an adult, experience literally provides the organizing framework for an infant and child” (p. 87). Further, Hart (2008) remarks: “Early life experiences have tremendous impact on the eventual architecture of the brain (p.62).

Advances in the understanding of early childhood development have repeatedly found that learning begins in the womb, in terms of maternal health, and continues as soon as a child is exposed to the world around them. If we know there are conflict resolution foundation abilities in the areas of: orientation, perception, emotion, communication, and creative and critical thinking³ which are precursors to cooperative conflict behavior, why not educate right from the start?

³ (Crawford&Bodine, 1996) see chapter VI.

C. Social Emotional Intelligence Literature

Social Emotional literature finds these following competencies are most predictive of a child's ability to learn and solve problems non-violently (Cohen & Sandy 2007):

- Awareness of self and others(reflective and empathic abilities)
- Flexibility and creativity in problem-solving and decision-making
- Ability to regulate impulses
- Capacity to cooperate
- Skills in communicating clearly and directly
- Learning to be self motivating
- Forming and maintaining friendships

Of course parents and caregivers would need to model these competencies in order for children to develop these skills.

The field of Social and emotional intelligence recognizes one of the barriers to young students gaining these skills is the failure of current institutions of higher learning to educate teachers in these skills. Cohen& Sandy (2007), in their chapter 'The Social, Emotional, and Academic Education of Children' explain:

“Children’s accomplishments are always guided by the behavior and belief systems of the important adults in their lives...adults are role models who influence children most strongly by the ways in which they behave towards each other and with the children in their care. If these adults lack social and emotional competency, children will quickly notice the discrepancy...Unfortunately, little attention has been given to ..adults being social-emotional learners themselves. In fact, most colleges and departments of education do not include [social, emotional, & academic education] as

a vital and explicit dimension in teacher education...it represents one of the most important 'next steps' that we can and need to take" (Bar-on et al p.71).

This speaks to the fact that in order for preschool children to learn conflict resolution skills and behaviors, their parents or primary caregivers must also be familiar and competent with these skills.

III. Pre School Setting Conflict Resolution Programs and Curriculums

Quite a few efforts have been made over the past twenty years at including conflict resolution education in preschool programs, and with great success. However, these programs are focused on the classroom setting and they require staff training which can be expensive. They often include parent involvement in varying degrees through parent newsletters and participatory workshops. Although I am focusing on reaching parents and children who may not be in a day care or pre-school setting, I think it is relevant to give a brief overview and present some of the findings on the research these programs have developed.

Peaceful Kids Program

Researchers at Columbia University Teachers College International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution (ICCCR) created a program and curriculum in 1997 named 'The Peaceful Kids Early Social-Emotional Conflict Resolution Program'.

The ECSEL program was a ‘multi cultural, theory based approach to promoting social-emotional, cognitive, and conflict resolution skills development’ (Sandy & Boardman, p. 337). This program was implemented in early education Head Start Programs in NYC (ages 2-6) from fall 1997 through fall 1999. Eighteen classrooms were evaluated in the study. 1/3 of the classrooms received ECSEL training for parents, teachers and children, 1/3 received training for teachers and students only, and the last 1/3 received no ECSEL training.

Children in the classrooms that received parent, teacher and student training showed significant increases in assertiveness, cooperation and self control and decreases in aggressiveness and socially withdrawn behavior.

Parents who received ECSEL showed increases in authoritative parenting styles and decreases in permissive and over reactive parenting styles, as measured by: ‘The Parenting Scale’(Arnold, O’Leary, Wolff,& Acker1993) which measures discipline practices in parents of preschool children. (Sandy et al., p337). Authoritative parenting reflects behavior and attitudes which reinforce appropriate behavior in children and respect for family rules and decisions (p. 342). They found that one of the important messages for parents to understand is that during the second and third years of life, a child is developing autonomy. While this can become a source of conflict between the child and others, the increasing assertiveness of the child signals the onset of self regulated behavior. Adults should foster positive self regulated behavior rather than compliance to adult demands. Below is a list of the developmental tasks identified by the ECSEL program.

Developmental Tasks in Peaceful Kids ECSEL

1. Self identity- separating self from others
2. Self-Control- the control of impulses and emotions, and the ability to postpone immediate gratification
3. Self-efficacy- the sense of being able to accomplish things for oneself
4. Self-esteem- which increases with developing capabilities and others' validation of these capabilities
5. Emotional competence- learning to recognize and verbalize feelings in self and others
6. Prosocial behavior- sharing
7. Communication- listening and asking questions
8. Cooperation- working together to accomplish a task
9. Assertiveness-verbalizing one's own desires and needs
10. Problem solving- discovering options other than fight or flight in conflicts
11. Conflict resolution- selecting an option/ resolution that works for the individuals involved in the conflict (Sandy & Boardman, 2000 p.338)

Program evaluations found that in child care centers where parents were involved in the Peaceful Kids program through meetings and take-home activities, children showed the greatest gains in social skills. However, getting the parents to attend training sessions was often a problem because of their work and time commitments. The parents were taught to use the 'SOAR' Conflict Resolution Model:

Stop and think

Open up and talk about how you feel/ what you want

Ask questions and listen

Resolve it together

(Sandy & Boardman p.348)

The authors concluded that: “Children’s’ academic, social, and future success as adults requires the relationship skills that constructive conflict management helps to develop. Specialists in childhood development agree that early childhood is the time for acquiring these skills, and the Peaceful Kids ECSEL program shows strong potential for providing the experience to prevent later social-emotional and academic problems and for empowering children to resolve conflicts assertively, while considering and honoring the inputs and interests of others” (Sandy et al. p.355)

The authors also state that the most important ‘voice’ in the program was that of the children. They noted that children revealed diverse perceptions of their major conflict issues and that they expressed a variety of different emotions while responding to the same experience (e.g. holding hands during circle time). Asking children questions and allowing children to express their views can help resolve conflicts and also help them get to know themselves and how they operate, thus encouraging self-efficacy. Teaching children to be independent while also valuing their inter-dependence is of utmost importance for healthy relationships. The Peaceful Kids ECSEL was funded for three years. I could not find a follow up program, but they do provide an address for parent and staff development materials at Srh5@columbia.edu.

High Scope Infant Toddler Program

The High Scope program in Ypsilanti, MI promotes high quality early childcare and preschool education. They also produce curriculums and trainings which teach their methods. High Scope is best known for its first- of –its- kind 40 year study on the long

term effects quality preschool can have on participants. The relevance to my project is that they employ a specific conflict resolution approach with the preschool children.

The 1962-2002 study: ‘The Perry Pre-School Study’ tracked and documented outcomes with a sample of 123 African American children identified as ‘high risk’. Fifty-eight of the children received high quality early care. The remaining sixty –five children received no preschool programming. The Perry Preschool program included ‘key experiences’ such as development of: sense of self, social relations, creative representation (artistic appreciation), movement, music, communication and language, exploring objects, numbers, space, and time. They also employed a specific conflict resolution approach with the students that consisted of a series of steps designed for young children aged 18 months to 6 years based on six simple mediation steps that teachers use with children during emotionally charged conflict situations. The steps are:

- (1) Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions;
- (2) Acknowledge children's feelings;
- (3) Gather information;
- (4) Restate the problem;
- (5) Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together
- (6) Be prepared to give follow-up support.

“In the High Scope Perry Preschool Program, children participated in their own education, by planning, carrying out, and reviewing their own activities as part of their learning experience” (Schweinhart, 2005). In other words, the program taught the students the ability to move from the present (planning) to the future (carrying out) and

to reflect on the past (reviewing their own activities). This ability to plan, carry out and to review one's actions and the effects of one's actions creates the ability to take responsibility for one's impulses and behavior and the effect upon the environment. It provides the ability to make necessary changes in the future, while at the same time promoting self efficacy.

Among the results of this study are:

Adults who participated in the High Scope curriculum as preschool children, at age 40:

- Have higher earnings than the control group
- Were more likely to own homes
- Committed fewer crimes
- Females required less mental ailment treatments
- Higher scores on school achievement and literacy tests
- Higher high school graduation rates

This study indicates that the benefits of educating pre-school children in social skills, self efficacy and communication are long lasting and have cross-cutting effects along the life span. The mediation steps they used in conflict situations show that conflict resolution methods can be utilized with pre school age children.

Conflict Resolution Skills Pre-school Curriculums

There are now many curriculums specifically for preschool which childcare programs or individuals can obtain. They are available from organizations such as: Educators for Social Responsibility, ABC Task Force, National Association for the Education of Young Children, New Society Publishers, The Committee for Children, Children's Creative Response to Conflict, International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, and the Peace Education Foundation, however, parents/caregivers who are

not affiliated with formal day care programs would have to seek them out on their own volition for ex.: by searching on the internet or local library.(See appendix for list of curriculums)

IV. What Parents can do to Support Healthy Emotional Development in Early Childhood

The skills involved in creative problem solving behaviors require emotional competence. Parents can help their children by supporting their emotional development. Parenting may be one of the most important tasks a person can embark upon. It is peculiar therefore, that there is not more instruction or formal training in the skills of parenting. Perhaps this could be a result of changes in the role of the family in society since the industrial revolution. In the past, parenting skills were passed on from generation to generation through a culture which valued family relationships. Today, the focus on individualism and corporate economics has produced a culture concerned with material gain and consumerism. We hear a lot about the importance of parenting, but there is not a public campaign to educate the common working parent on the wealth of research and information that has been developed and collected in the past fifty years. However, this information should be communicated more systematically to parents and caregivers. In the conflict resolution books for children I am suggesting be written, the preface to parents should include the developmental skill that the book is trying to communicate.

The ‘Neurons to Neighborhoods’ study compiled a great deal of what is known in the field of child development. It suggests that the following concepts frame our

understanding of the nature of early human development. There are four concepts here that relate most to conflict resolution and to the importance of Conflict Resolution training in early childhood. These are highlighted below:

CORE CONCEPTS OF DEVELOPMENT

1. Human development is shaped by a dynamic and continuous interaction between biology and experience.
2. Culture influences every aspect of human development and is reflected in childrearing beliefs and practices designed to promote healthy adaptation.
3. **The growth of self-regulation is a cornerstone of early childhood development that cuts across all domains of behavior.**
4. Children are active participants in their own development, reflecting the intrinsic human drive to explore and master one's environment.
5. **Human relationships, and the effects of relationships on relationships, are the building blocks of healthy development.**
6. The broad range of individual differences among young children often makes it difficult to distinguish normal variations and maturational delays from transient disorders and persistent impairments.
7. The development of children unfolds along individual pathways whose trajectories are characterized by continuities and discontinuities, as well as by a series of significant transitions.
8. **Human development is shaped by the ongoing interplay among sources of vulnerability and sources of resilience.**
9. The timing of early experiences can matter, but more often than not, the developing child remains vulnerable to risks and open to protective influences throughout the early years of life and into adulthood.
10. **The course of development can be altered in early childhood by effective interventions that change the balance between risk and protection, thereby shifting the odds in favor of more adaptive outcomes.**

Below, I discuss the relevance of these four concepts:

1. #3 The growth of self-regulation is a cornerstone of early childhood development that cuts across all domains of behavior.

The ability to self regulate is the one of the most important skills a parent can encourage. The literature on Emotional and Social Intelligence (Bar-on 2007) tells us that parents can help to promote the growth of self regulation by:

A. Limit setting, and B. Establishing boundaries.

A. Limit Setting:

Respecting limits requires parents to model behaviors such as: exercising emotional self control, expressing feelings non-destructively, and thinking of alternate solutions to problems, all of which are qualities needed in order to resolve conflicts constructively. A parent must respect the child's limits as well as teach a child to respect others' limits. For example, parents should listen to children, their likes and dislikes and respect their requests when possible. When in a restaurant, for example, even though the child may say they need to get up and walk around, it is not appropriate. But, if there is an adult who could accommodate the child's restlessness and bring them out for a stretch, that would be an acceptable compromise on both the child's and the parent's limits.

B. Establishing boundaries:

1. emotional boundaries in relationships
2. boundaries with regard to health and wellness
3. boundaries in regard to consumption and entertainment ⁴

⁴ [three types of boundaries suggested by Stern & Elias in their chapter on Emotionally Intelligent Parenting (Bar-On 2007): (p.39)]

These three boundaries are important because they help an individual take care of themselves. By teaching a child to have healthy boundaries in relationships, health, and consumption, a parent is teaching self regulation. This builds self respect and self esteem which are also precursors to healthy communication and problem solving.

In their chapter on Emotionally Intelligent Parenting, Stern & Elias suggest that for parents to effectively set limits and boundaries they need the skills to regulate their own strong emotions often evoked by their children's reactions to the boundaries and limits. Parents must also use creative problem solving methods (p.41). Parents will be most effective in helping their children to develop these essential skills if they have their own emotions under control.

Perhaps many parents have difficulty with setting boundaries because they may feel hypocritical or don't want to be 'too hard' on their children. For example parents may feel 'well, I used to do that as a child and I got away with it... or he's only a child, boys will be boys...etc.'. While it does take a tremendous amount of energy to uphold boundaries, parents should not miss the opportunity to set standards they feel are important. Learning conflict resolution strategies to help with the strong emotions that come along with boundary setting is a wise choice. For example: if a child wants another cookie they may cry or throw a tantrum because their will has been dashed. Explanations that too much sugar is not good for the teeth or the body may not properly convince a child to stop insisting. This is an opportunity for creative problem solving such as distraction: I understand that you are mad because you would like another cookie, but: 'look have you ever seen an airplane go so fast 'or' is that a Dalmatian dog' or use humor

such as break out into a blues song about a child wanting a cookie so bad etc, etc. If the child will not or can not calm down then the parent must follow through on a consequence that has been stated such as ‘if you can not calm down we will have to go home for the rest of the day and you will spend five minutes in time out’ or ‘next time you will not have cookies at all’. Different strategies work with each unique personality. It is up to the parents to come up with creative strategies to help their children to navigate through respecting boundaries and limits without breaking their will, while at the same time building self respect and self esteem.

2. #5 Human relationships, and the effects of relationships on relationships, are the building blocks of healthy development.

Conflict resolution theory holds that dealing with conflict through constructive processes preserves relationships, while destructive processes can damage future relations (Deutsch 1993). Learning to cooperate in our relationships and teaching our children cooperative behaviors helps in all relationships.

Communication abilities are key to preserving and developing relationships. Listening to our children and helping them learn to listen is a skill that is imperative to conflict resolution as well as relationship building and social emotional intelligence.

Having meaningful dialogue and reading to children helps them develop the vocabulary to express their feelings in words rather than acting out. Even with very young children a caregiver can teach this concept. For example: a young child is pulling at your leg and whining and stomping getting more and more worked up and upset. Instead of reacting by giving the child what it wants, a caregiver should take this opportunity to help the

child develop self control as well as communication skills by saying: ‘hold on a second, I see that you are upset but I can’t understand what you are trying to tell me, what are you trying to say? Use your words.’ If the child can not find the words, a caregiver can suggest a few hints to help the child express themselves. This teaches a child to communicate using words rather than emotional outbursts which will help in all social situations.

3. #8 Human development is shaped by the ongoing interplay among sources of vulnerability and sources of resilience.

Conflict resolution skills help a person to deal with problem solving in constructive ways. It could be said that CR skills increase a person’s resilience to vulnerabilities by creating options for reactions to stressors that may occur. Many times when confronted by bullies or people who may be trying to cross boundaries, using our words can be very effective at protecting ourselves. Again, teaching children language skills to express themselves empowers them to have a variety of choices in a situation.

For example if someone tries to grab a toy or a swing a child can react by saying: I am using the swing/toy right now but I will give you your turn in a minute when I am done.

4. #10 The course of development can be altered in early childhood by effective interventions that change the balance between risk and protection, thereby shifting the odds in favor of more adaptive outcomes.

Again, parents who are able to teach their children effective problem solving skills in early childhood can increase the child’s ability to protect themselves from their own or

outside harmful behavior. This is the basis of my thesis. Giving children the tools they can use to deal with conflict constructively will produce adaptive behavior which can have long term effects and improve outcomes in their lives.

V. Storytelling

Storytelling is at the core of conflict resolution. In a circular way, conflicts begin with a story and are also resolved by recreating, merging, or improving that story and creating a hopeful ending (Sontag, 2000). I am interested in storytelling as a medium in which to bridge the distance between the field of Conflict Resolution and parents/caregivers of young children because reading and storytelling are used with children starting at birth and help a child make sense of the world around them. Young children respond to methods such as storytelling, songs, and dramatic play. For example, parents and caregivers can approach conflict by helping children to define the different versions or perspectives of the story, brainstorm solutions, and create hopeful endings. Parents and caregivers can also tell their children stories in which the characters demonstrate the abilities needed for the cooperative resolution of conflict.

In their chapter 'Emotionally Intelligent Parenting', Stern & Elias (2007) remark:

'these days many people lament the loss of civility among communities and families and attribute it to the transfer of storytelling- a significant form of reflection- from grandparents, extended family members and close friends to less personal media outlets'.

(Bar-On et al, p42)

The traditional use of storytelling throughout human existence has been as a teaching tool to pass on social mores (see: Campbell, Joseph). However, storytelling in American culture today is used mostly as entertainment for entertainments' sake and recreational pleasure. In fact, many children in America today are exposed to content on television and computer which does not model the behaviors society expects of our citizens such as: the ability to cooperate, to listen, to follow rules, and to have self control. Some children's programming could even be described as harmful to the developing child such as the popular cartoon "SpongeBob Square Pants©" which uses language in non-meaningful ways. For example, referring to objects with words that have no relevance.

The loss of personal storytelling with the objective to pass on important knowledge in the family and society creates a deficit of meaningful connection for our youth (Stern& Elias, 2007). Glamorizing adverse lifestyles and behaviors in the media encourages our children to follow *those* storylines and misses an opportunity at creating a more responsible peaceful society. In native cultures such as the Celtic tradition or Native American traditions, storytelling was used as a teaching tool as well as entertainment during the long winters with no electricity with the expressed purpose of helping the youth make sense of the world around them.

Here is an example of a teaching story from the Native American Cherokee Nation:

A Grandfather was talking with his grandson he said: "A fight is going on inside me. It is a fight between two wolves. One wolf is anger, envy, war, greed, self-pity, sorrow, regret, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, selfishness and arrogance. The other wolf is good, and friendly, he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness,

benevolence, justice, fairness, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, gratitude, and deep vision."

The grandson asked: "Grandfather, which wolf will win?"

The elder replied, "The one I feed."

'Teaching stories' such as this one help a child feel connected to a greater history or common human experience and give direction about what kinds of solutions (or folly) previous people have experienced.

Storytelling for young children requires much paraphrasing and thoughtful translation to make sure the words and ideas presented are within the grasp of the child's experience.

The story above, for example, could be told to a child perhaps three years old or more but with a simpler explanation of the wolves' qualities. For example one wolf could be sharing and kindness, polite and mannerly, patient and a good listener while the other wolf could be mean and careless, not a good listener and selfish.

Even books that are written for young children may need to be read with the individual child's perception abilities in mind. Using a few words to reinforce an unfamiliar word can be helpful such as: "The boy picked up his backpack and stepped off the curb with a sigh" could be read as: 'the boy picked up his bag that had his books in it and stepped down off the sidewalk into the crosswalk. He blew out a big breath of air called a sigh (and then sigh to demonstrate)' then maybe ask the child 'why do you think the boy made a sigh sound'? After reading a few times with an extended explanation the story can then

be read in the original format and the child will understand what is meant. Reading in this way increases the child's vocabulary, their understanding and perception capabilities.

Parents can help their child develop a more comprehensive worldview by telling stories that expand the child's imagination. (Devagupta, 2006). Introducing young children to many different cultures stories, music, and art helps them to perceive differences as a matter of interest rather than a threat to their identity. When parents demonstrate an interest in understanding other points of view and cultural worldviews then children can also accept many perspectives as part of a normal, healthy and interesting society. Author Norma Simon has a series of books that are wonderful for this purpose: All Kinds of Families, All kinds of Children, Why am I different, and All Families are Special, are a few of her books for very young children.

In appendix IV, I provide more extensive notes and guidelines on storytelling for children. Some of the most important qualities in stories for young children are that they address topics with which the child has some familiarity, expand the imagination, and that they provide a sense of hope for the future.

VI. Conflict Resolution Theory Content for Children's Literature

Which conflict theories would be most relevant to parents/caregivers and their children?

The most relevant research I came across in my studies was consistently organizations advising government agencies on reducing conflict and violence in our nation's schools, and advising government on best child developmental practices. One of these documents, Crawford and Bodine's (1998): Conflict Resolution Education was most helpful. Their

concise presentation of the summary of conflict resolution theory is a most appropriate framework for children's literature on conflict resolution.

Foundation Abilities for Conflict Resolution

Let's take a look at the foundational abilities organized and put forth by Crawford and Bodine (1996) in their incredibly precise publication Conflict Resolution Education. Crawford and Bodine point out that acquiring the problem solving skills of conflict resolution require various attitudes and understandings. They suggest training in:

Six foundation abilities:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Orientation | 4. Communication |
| 2. Perception | 5. Creative thinking |
| 3. Emotion | 6. Critical thinking |

Orientation abilities: encompass values, beliefs, attitudes, and propensities that are compatible with effective conflict resolution.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| *Nonviolence | *Tolerance |
| *Compassion and empathy | *Self Respect |
| *Fairness | *Respect for others |
| *Trust | *Celebration of diversity |
| *Justice | *Appreciation for controversy |

◊ Perception abilities: encompass the understanding that conflict lies not in objective reality, but in how individuals perceive that reality.

- *Empathizing in order to see the situation as the other side sees it
- *Self-Evaluating to recognize personal fears
- *Suspending judgment and blame to facilitate a free exchange of views

◊ Emotion abilities: encompass behaviors to manage anger, frustration, fear, and other emotions effectively.

- *Learning language for communicating emotions effectively
- *Expressing emotions in nonaggressive, noninflammatory ways
- *Exercising self-control in order not to react to the emotional outbursts of others

◊ Communication abilities: encompass behaviors of listening and speaking that allow for the effective exchange of facts and feelings.

- *Listening to understand by using active listening behaviors
- *Speaking to be understood
- *Reframing emotionally charged statements into neutral, less emotional terms

◊ Creative thinking abilities: encompass behaviors that enable individuals to be innovative in defining problems and making decisions.

- *Contemplating the problem from a variety of perspectives
- *Approaching the problem-solving task as a mutual pursuit of possibilities

*Brainstorming to create, elaborate, and enhance a variety of options

◊ Critical thinking abilities: encompass the behaviors of analyzing, hypothesizing, predicting, strategizing, comparing/contrasting, and evaluating.

*Recognizing existing criteria and making them explicit

*Establishing objective criteria

*Applying criteria as the basis for choosing options

*Planning future behaviors

Using the above foundation abilities as a framework for the characters behaviors and personalities in children's literature would be a great way to demonstrate cooperative conflict resolution behaviors. Modeling behaviors such as tolerance and respect, appreciation of diversity and an appreciation of controversy are what helps conflicts stay nonviolent. Looking at problems as challenges to be solved by using respectful communication practices are what helps people get along. Seeing from multiple points of view is a skill which can help all areas of life. Crawford and Bodine give a clever example of a teaching story which helps build perspective with their: 'Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf Retold through Negotiation' in which the story is told from the wolf's perspective. (See appendix V). Appendix I provides a list of books appropriate to be read to young children birth to preschool which deal with conflict resolution topics.

VII. Conflict Resolution Theory for Parents and Caregivers

One of the greatest skills a parent or caregiver can teach a child is to deal with conflict constructively. Solving conflict is a skill just like tying shoes or playing a sport. The abilities required in constructive conflict resolution include: emotional flexibility, communicating constructively, active listening, the ability to see from multiple perspectives, the ability to brainstorm solutions, and a sense of hope for successful outcomes. While it is not necessary to teach a young child Conflict Theory, it is important for parents and caregivers to understand the nature of conflict and conflict behaviors so that they can teach their children constructive responses to conflict which will help the child use moments of conflict as an opportunity towards social and emotional growth.

Below is an overview of Conflict theory for parents and caregivers.

Conflict is a fact of nature. At best, it can be a signal that something important needs our attention or that a change is needed, thus creating opportunities for growth. At worst, it can be a destructive infringement on our boundaries that needs to be dealt with creatively in order to avoid violence. In either situation, some of the most important factors in the resolution of conflict are the abilities to manage emotions, to communicate effectively, and to have hope for positive outcomes.

Conflict Resolution theory has methods of dealing with conflict constructively that we can apply to every day life. One of the most well known, from researchers at Harvard University is Fisher, Ury, & Patton's 'Getting to Yes' negotiation strategies.

They suggest **four principles of conflict resolution**:

1. Separate people from the problem With children, it is very important to separate the child from the problem, for example if a child does something that is not acceptable, it is best to give them space to ‘save face’ by creating options. For example: John breaks the cookie jar. Approach calmly, ask a question or make a statement not directed at the child’s guilt such as: oh yikes the cookie jar broke, what happened? Or what should we do now? Or use humor: did that cookie jar jump off the counter again? It never listens! Obviously the child will feel guilty already so there could be value in walking through the problem with the child as a guide; so to speak, helping them process what could have been done differently, what can be done presently, and what could be done in the future to avoid such outcomes. An example of teaching a child to separate the people from the problem would be: George and Sandy are arguing over a bat and ball and George says: ‘Sandy is such a jerk He is so selfish’, a parent could suggest to George, to define: what exactly is he mad about, what did Sandy do? The parent could then say: ‘So you are mad because Sandy took the bat and ball, do you think maybe he wants to play ball also? Perhaps you could ask Sandy not to grab next time and invite him to play ball together. When you are mad you should tell the person what they did that made you mad rather than call them names because they won’t understand what they did wrong if you just insult them.’”

2. Focus on interests not positions: interests are the motivations behind a person’s position in a conflict. Interests define the problem: ‘what are you interested in?’ One of the best known examples of this principle is: there is an orange, two people want the

orange. After dialogue it is discovered one person wants to eat the orange, the other wants the peel to bake with. Both can share the orange. Focusing on interests instead of positions, refers to identifying and talking about what the underlying interest in the conflict is for example: Maya doesn't want to go to school. There are hundreds of reasons why this could be. Sometimes a child is not able to communicate directly what is actually going on so it takes a bit of flexibility and soothing conversation to help a child open up. For example, a caregiver could sit down quietly and tell a story about a time that they didn't want to go to school when they were a child or ask if the child is happy and feels safe. Helping a child to identify how they feel and to create options for their responses to stress in their life helps them develop the ability to cope with problems constructively.

3. Invent options for mutual gain: This refers to brainstorming solutions to conflict which can satisfy both parties' interests. Children and parents can brainstorm options without criticism of any suggestions. Encouraging children to develop the skill of creating multiple solutions, while some may be silly and outrageous, can bring a bit of comic relief to the situation and also develop the child's imagination. Inventing options for mutual gain has two parts. This is the skill of empathizing with others who you may be in conflict with and developing the ability to brainstorm creative solutions to a problem that satisfy both people's interests. This can be done as an exercise even when no conflict exists such as: what would you do if you found a kite and both you and your friend wanted to play with it? Or tell a story of a time when you worked out a difficult problem by inventing creative solutions with a friend. The more examples a child has in

their memory to draw upon, the better they will be at thinking of solutions that give everybody a ‘happy ending’.

4. Use objective criteria: fair standards and procedures. Rules and boundaries should be clear and consistent with children. Parents should communicate to children clearly and often, what is expected of them. Parenting requires a tremendous amount of repetition. Having key phrases such as: ‘use your words’ when children are whining or frustrated can help a child understand how to calm down and communicate. Parents should also admit when they have made mistakes or overreacted. This teaches children that it is ok to make mistakes and that it helps relationships to be honest and apologize when you’re wrong, this builds trust. Children are learning to cope with rules and boundaries and it is important that the rules and procedures are clear and consistent. Children can become familiar with the laws of society which represent fair procedure, for example: Sarah has borrowed a video from the library and watches it over and over. She wants to keep it an extra week but it can not be renewed. She cries and says ‘it’s not fair!’. This is an opportunity to explain the way libraries work by borrowing and returning items so that everyone can share the resources. Although it doesn’t seem fair to her that she can’t have what she wants, explaining the procedure helps her to empathize with others and to understand the fair procedure. Sarah then might reply with a phrase from daycare: ‘you get what you get and you don’t get upset’ showing she has found a way to accept the rule.

To the Balcony

When in the heat of a conflict, another strategy presented by Fisher et al. is ‘going to the balcony’. This can be done physically or in your mind when in the midst of conflict you can give yourself time alone to reflect, calm down, breathe, brainstorm solutions, and generally give yourself and the child some emotional space. This is similar to ‘time outs’ which are used widely and successfully by many parents and children today.

Conflicts arise out of 3 origins: unmet needs, different values, and limited resources.

When in conflict with a child, a parent can explore: have their **needs** been **met**?

*Physical (tired, hungry, thirsty, too hot, too cold, need exercise?)

*Mental (bored, needs more/less challenge, appropriately challenging environment)

*Emotional (sad, happy, confused, etc)

Different Values may play out with a child and adult when the child wants to stay and play but the adult is on a schedule and must go. The child values the experience they are having, the adult values the time commitments they have made.

Limited Resources with children could be when there is one puzzle but two children want to play with it. The children could agree to work on the puzzle together or to take turns.

Responses to Conflict

Responses to conflict can be categorized into three types: **Soft**, **hard**, or **principled**.

Depending upon the response to conflict, conflicts can have various outcomes such as:

both sides lose, one side wins, or both sides win (Crawford, 1998).

Soft responses are behaviors such as agreement to avoid confrontation. These occur usually between people whose relationship will continue into the future and want to avoid conflict. Soft responses such as conflict avoidance can hinder relationship growth. A soft response might be if a child lets another child push them around or cross their boundaries without speaking up for themselves. A caregiver could help by saying something like: ‘Lilly I think you may have just taken Nancy’s toy, did you want a turn with it? And Nancy, were you finished playing with it? Then let the children respond, and then pleasantly say: ‘maybe next time you could ask first, Lilly?’. This will help both children’s self esteem and relationship by validating and assisting their feelings, rights, and responses.

Hard responses occur between those whose goal is victory without regard to the relationship. Hard responses are detrimental to cooperation and relationships. We see hard responses quite often with young children when they grab things from each other and fight. Parents and caregivers spend much time with toddlers teaching them to share and to be kind and considerate.

Principled responses to conflict can produce a win for both sides. Principled responses to conflict are behaviors which help to resolve conflicts in cooperative ways, preserve relationships, and produce good outcomes for both parties. The skills involved in principled responses are the skills parents should use with children: problem solving with good communication and empathic listening skills and the ability to see conflicts from various perspectives. Principled responses to conflict involve: listening, understanding, respecting, and resolving (Crawford & Bodine. p.8). Though a caregiver or parent

wouldn't say to a child: 'use your principled responses!', one could say: 'are you being a good listener?', or 'listen to my words', or 'is that the way you would want someone to treat you?' or 'what do you think we could do to make everyone feel better?' or 'how do you think it would feel if I didn't listen to you? Would you like that?'

Nancy Carlsson-Paige and Diane Levin (1998), in their book about building conflict resolution skills with children, summarize the skills and concepts underlying conflict resolution: First, understand the conflict: its causes, what it means for the people involved in the conflict, what are the different perspectives and feelings that are happening? Second, understand what escalates conflict: put downs, bias statements, hostile physical or verbal contact. Third, understand what de-escalates conflict: use "I" statements (speak without casting blame), active listening (focus on what the other person is saying without the interjection of your own thoughts), try to really hear what the other person is trying to say and repeat back to the person their own words to let them know you heard them. When children feel heard it is notable how cooperative they can become. Fourth, learn about the nature of solutions; win-win, win-lose, lose-lose, try to brainstorm and come up with win-win solutions that will bring everyone some satisfaction.

One of the most important things for Parents and caregivers of young children to remember is that we are partners with our children in assisting them toward self sufficient behavior. We can help our children have hope for the future through creative problem solving and promoting cooperative behaviors. When we view problem solving as a puzzle to be solved together and view our problems as opportunities toward growth our relationships grow stronger and our children become more self sufficient.

Talking with Children about Conflict

While it is not necessary to explain the ‘nuts and bolts’ of conflict theory to children, parents and caregivers can use conflict theory to understand and deal with conflict more constructively with their children. When parents model creative conflict resolution behaviors a child will develop these skills. Teaching a child conflict resolution skills does not mean that there is an absence of conflict. What it does mean is that conflict is dealt with in a transparent, transformative way. Conflict is identified, talked about, solutions are created, and there is discourse on family conflicts and the parent/ child experience. Conflict resolution with young children is more about managing emotional expressiveness.

Saarni (2007) remarks:

(Emotional) “management is facilitated by a supportive parent being available in a situation that emotionally challenges the child...who sympathetically hears what the child has to say, provides reasoned alternatives and helps the child modulate their emotional arousal so that the child can begin to learn to manage their self presentation effectively” (p.27-28)⁵

Many times a child may not understand certain words or exactly what is expected of them though they may not be able to express that they don’t understand. It is very important to

⁵ (see Gottman, Katz, & Hooven.1997 for parental coaching on emotions)

ask and explain words to children in language that they understand. Make sure the child is 'on the same page' or try to get on the 'page' the child is on.

Talking with children about conflict is pretty similar to talking to adults about the nature of conflict, only simplified. Conflict is a natural part of everyday life experience. It is how we approach conflict and the tools we use to deal with conflict that make the difference between productive (good) outcomes or destructive (bad) outcomes.

The message to children is that it is normal to have disagreements and different views but we can get along better with each other when we talk, explain how we feel, identify what we are interested in, listen to each other, ask questions in order to understand and apologize when we are wrong. I think Deutsch puts it best when he suggests, in order to cooperate with each other in conflict, we should remain: firm, fair, and friendly. State your view, ask for the other person's view, listen, come up with suggestions together, and try to remain friendly. Much of this depends on managing our emotions.

Whether it is adult- child or child-child conflict, the same rules apply as in any conflict: go to the balcony, calm down and figure out how you feel and why; talk it out; come up with solutions; choose one together or get a third party's opinion and then try to reach agreement.

In summary

In Appendix I. I provide an extensive list of books for young children that can open the dialogue about the nature of conflict and conflict resolution behaviors between adults and

children. In Appendix II. are conflict resolution curriculums developed for pre school age children that can be borrowed from any library which can also be used by parents/ caregivers with their children. Below is a chart of simplified Conflict theory for Parents/caregivers.

Key messages for parents



- Conflict is a normal part of everyday life
- Conflict can be dealt with constructively or destructively
- Conflict can be used as a tool for transformation
- How we approach conflict determines a constructive or destructive outcome
- Constructive conflict resolution preserves relationships

Key messages for parents (con't)



- Teaching children to deal with conflict constructively helps them in all aspects of life
- Modeling behavior is the most effective method of teaching
- get to know your own responses to conflict and learn to consciously create constructive rather than destructive responses

Nature of Conflict



- Arises from unmet needs:
Belonging, Power, Freedom, fun

- 2choices:

1. continue conflict 2. problem solve

Conflict resolution occurs when individuals become partners in a search for a fair agreement that is advantageous to both

Parents can help their child's development by engaging in constructive conflict resolution behaviors

VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion, I have found that preschool children do have the developmental capabilities to learn conflict resolution behaviors. In fact the current recommendations toward educating preschool children include social and emotional intelligence methods which run parallel to conflict resolution skills. There are many conflict resolution resources available for parents/caregivers and their preschool children; however most of them are developed for a preschool or organizational group setting. While the United States Department of Justice and Department of Education have funded studies, reports, and manuals on Dispute Resolution in order to reduce violence in the nation's elementary, middle and high schools, no public effort has been made toward educating parents or the general public.

The pre-school programs which have implemented conflict resolution programs have had great success with individual behavior change in young children, especially when the parents/caregivers also received training and information on the skills of problem solving. However parental attendance at trainings can be impeded by work schedules, transportation issues, and other factors. While a public effort at introducing Conflict Resolution Education to the general public would be ideal, I did not find any indication of that happening currently. My recommendation would be for parents and caregivers to become familiar with conflict resolution behaviors and practices and teach these to their children. Reading books, telling stories, and having meaningful dialogue would be most effective methods at instilling these concepts in infants and young children.

There are books and tape cassettes available which parents can use to teach children. Educators for Social Responsibility carry a cassette and song book called “Teaching Peace” by Red Grammer, a wonderful collection of songs that covers conflict resolution topics such as: peacemaking, multicultural appreciation, self esteem, friendship, individuality, gender equality, interdependence, encouragement, negotiating, anger management and problem solving. The songbook has a complete bibliography with books that follow up on the songs’ themes, a teacher’s guide to discussions and activities, and a step by step instruction for a peace dance. I have provided the cassette and song book to the Program in Dispute Resolution library at University of Massachusetts, Boston.

My recommendations for future work with Conflict Resolution Education in Early Childhood Development would be to take Crawford and Bodine’s ‘Foundation Abilities for Conflict Resolution’ and the key messages for parents in chapter VII. and create a series of conflict resolution stories for children and their caregivers. I would also recommend a public information campaign aimed at parents and caregivers in the skills of Conflict Resolution. Another area of work would be to compile a list of conflict resolution terms and words for parents and caregivers and their children.

IX. References

- Bar-On, M. E. (2007). *EDUCATING PEOPLE TO BE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.
- Berk, L. (2001). *Awakening Children's Minds; How Parents and Teachers can Make a Difference*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bodine, C. a. (1996). *Conflict Resolution Education; A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth Serving Organizations and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings*. Washington, DC: US Dep't of Justice and US Dep't of Education.
- Burton, J. W. (1996). *Conflict Resolution; Its Language and Processes*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press.
- Carlsson-Paige, N. &. (1998). *Before Push Comes to Shove; Building Conflict Resolution Skills with Children*. St. Paul: Redleaf Press.
- Crawford, D. &. (1996). *Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth Serving Organizations, and community and Juvenile Justice Settings*. Diane Publishing.
- Crawford, Bodine, and F. Schrupf. 1994. Creating the Peaceable School: A Comprehensive Program for Teaching Conflict Resolution. Champaign, IL: Research Press, Inc., pp. 102–104, 106, 108, 110, 112
- Derman-Sparks, I. &. (1989). *Anti-Bias Curriculum; Tools for Empowering Young Children*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Deutsch, M. (May 1993). Educating for a Peaceful World. *American Psychologist Vol. 48 No. 5*, 510-517.
- Devagupta. (2006) A Parent's Essential Skill: Storytelling. In *Hinduism Today June/July*.
- Elias, S. &. (2007). Emotionally Intelligent Parenting. In M. &. Bar-On, *EDUCATING PEOPLE TO BE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT* (pp. 37-48). Westport: Praeger.
- Fisher, U. &. (1991). *Getting To Yes; Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- Fitzell, S. G. (1997). *Free the Children! Conflict Education For Strong and Peaceful Minds*. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Hart, S. (2008). *Brain, Attachment, Personality; An Introduction to Neuroaffective Development*. London: Karnac.

- Henley, M. (1997). *Teaching Self Control; A curriculum for responsible behavior*. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.
- Kreidler, W. J. (1994). *Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature*. NY: Scholastic.
- Ludwig, T. (2008). *Trouble Talk*. Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press.
- Luvmour, S. &. (1990). *Everone Wins! Cooperative Games and Activities*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.
- Perry, B.D.(2002) Childhood experience and the expression of genetic potential: what childhood neglect tells us about nature and nurture. *Brain and Mind*, 3:79-100.
- Prutzman, S. B. (1988). *The Freindly Classroom for a Small Planet; A Handbook on Creative Approaches to Living and Problem Solving for Children*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.
- Saarni, C. (2007). The Development of Emotional Competence: Pathways for Helping Children to Become Emotionally Intelligent. In M. &. Bar-On, *EDUCATING PEOPLE TO BE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT* (pp. 15-35). Westport: Praeger.
- Sandy, C. &. (2007). The Social, Emotional and Academic Education of Children: Theories, Goals, Methods and Assessments. In ,. M. Bar-On, *EDUCATING PEOPLE TO BE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT* (pp. 63-77). Westport: Praeger.
- Sandy & Boardman. (2000) The Peaceful Kids Conflict Resolution Program. In *The International Journal of Conflict Management*. Vol.11, no.4, pp337-357.
- Schweinhart, L. J., Montie, J., Xiang, Z., Barnett, W. S., Belfield, C. R., & Nores, M. (2005). Lifetime effects: The High Scope Perry Preschool study through age 40. (Monographs of the High Scope Educational Research Foundation, 14). Ypsilanti, MI: High Scope Press.
- Shedlock, M. (1951). *The Art of the Story-Teller*. New York: Dover. Shonkoff & Phillips.(2000). *From Neurons To Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Cambridge. National Academies Press.
- Sontag, K. (2000). *Valuing Conflict Narratives*. Boston: Umass Boston Masters Thesis.
- Wichert, S. (1989). *Keeping the Peace; Practicing Cooperation and Conflict Resolution with Preschoolers*. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

Appendix I List of Books that demonstrate Conflict Resolution Behaviors

1. Scupper the Sailor Dog .Margaret Wise Brown.NewYork:Random House Golden Books.1981.(original 1953 by Simon &Schuster)

– shows the development of a healthy sense of identity, creative problem solving, cultural diversity, and a sense of hope in problem solving

2. All kinds of Children .Norma Simon. Morton Grove, Ill.: Albert Whitman, 1999

– shows the similarities of children all over the world, that we all have the same basic needs but all grow up under unique circumstances.

3. The Berenstein Bears© series books are very good examples of family conflicts and how the bear family moves through them productively. These are great for young children because they provide many opportunities for dialogue and the parents are actively involved in the bear children’s daily routines and issues.

4. The Teaching Peace Songbook & Teachers Guide. Red Grammar, Chester, NY: Smilin Atcha Music, 1993.

5. Scheumann, P. (2004). Keeping the Peace Series:Dealing with Bullies. Edina: ABDO.Also (2004):(Acting with Kindness. Coping with Ange,r Learning about Differences, Working Together, Being a Peacekeeper)

The Following is a list of Conflict Resolution Books from the workshop:

Using Children’s Literature to Establish a Common Language for Conflict Resolution in Grades 1-2’ by Suzie Sluyter and Cassandra Reese 11/19/1994:

The books are described by key issues by the abbreviations: **C**=Community; **CR**= Conflict Resolution; **D**= Diversity; **F**= Feelings; **FS**= Friendship; **H**= Helping; **PS**= ProblemSolving; **S**=Sharing

Island of the Skog, by Steven Kellogg C, PS, CR

Amazing Grace, by Mary Hoffman F, H, FS, PS

Maria Therese, by Mary Atkinson PS, F, CR, FS

My Mother and I are Growing Strong, by Inez Maury F, PS, FS

A Chair for my Mother, by Vera Williams C, H, PS, F, FS

I was so Mad, by Norma Simon F

Rachel Parker Kindergarten Show-off, by Ann Martin F, CR, PS, FS, D

Nathan's Day, by Colin and Friedman F, PS, CR, C

Joshua's Day, by Sandra Surowiecki F, FS, CR

Mr. Grumpy's Outing, by John Burningham C, PS, CR, H, FS

A House is a House for Me, by Maryanne Hoberman C, D

Why am I Different, by Norma Simon D, C

Mathew and Tilly, by Rebecca Jones CR, FS, F, PS

Jamal's Busy Day, by Wade Johnson C, H

I Can't said the Ant, by Polly Cameron PS, C, H

Best Friends, by Miram Cohen FS, F, CR, PS

Jamaica series by Juanita Havill F, FS, CR

Everybody has Feelings, by Charles Avery FS, F, C

The Temper Tantrum Book, by Edna Mitchell F

What is a Feeling, by David Krueger F

The Doorbell Rang, by Pat Hutchins PS, F, S

Something from Nothing, by Phoebe Gilman PS, C

Caps for Sale, by Esphyr Slobodkina CR, PS, F

All kinds of Families, by Norma Simon D, C

Keeper of the Animals, by Caduto & Bruchac C, H

Keeper of the Earth, by Caduto & Bruchac PS, C, H

Appendix II

Conflict Resolution Curriculums for Children

Bodine, C. a. (1996). Conflict Resolution Education: A Guide to Implementing Programs in Schools, Youth Serving Organizations and Community and Juvenile Justice Settings.

Carlsson-Paige, N. &. (1998). Before Push Comes to Shove; Building Conflict Resolution Skills with Children. St. Paul: Redleaf Press.

Bodine, R., D. Crawford, and F. Schrupf. (1994). Creating the Peaceable School: A Comprehensive Program for Teaching Conflict Resolution. Champaign, IL: Research Press, Inc., pp. 102–104, 106, 108, 110, 112

Derman-Sparks, L. &. (1989). Anti-Bias Curriculum; Tools for Empowering Young Children. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Fitzell, S. G. (1997). Free the Children! Conflict Education For Strong and Peaceful Minds. Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers.

Henley, M. (1997). Teaching Self Control; A curriculum for responsible behavior. Bloomington, IN: National Education Service.

Kreidler, W. J. (1994). Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature. NY: Scholastic.

Levin, Diane. (2003) Teaching Young Children in Violent Times: Building a peaceable classroom. Cambridge: Educators for Social Responsibility.

Luvmour, S. &. (1990). Everone Wins! Cooperative Games and Activities. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers

Prutzman, S. B. (1988). The Freindly Classroom for a Small Planet; A Handbook on Creative Approaches to Living and Problem Solving for Children. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.

Wichert, S. (1989). Keeping the Peace; Practicing Cooperation and Conflict Resolution with Preschoolers. Philadelphia: New Society Publishers.

The Curriculums available for pre school age children cover topics such as:

-accepting conflict as a part of every day life, learning to cooperate, learning to communicate, building self esteem, (affirmation of ourselves and others), improving self image, learning to brainstorm solutions, development of self efficacy, appreciation of interdependence

Appendix III

Conflict Resolution Organizations

There are several organizations that have put out conflict resolution curriculums for preschool age children, most of them aimed at a childcare group setting:

Educators for Social Responsibility, Cambridge, Ma;

The ABC Task Force, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, DC;

New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, PA;

Committee for Children, Seattle, WA;

Children's Creative Response to Conflict, Nyack, NY;

International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, Teachers College, Columbia University, NY;

Peace Education Foundation, Miami, Fla.

These organizations also have handouts for parents, but I believe parents access these materials most commonly through organizations or groups who take it upon themselves to give the parents this information. Ex: playgroup, community center, parent liason etc. Although, many of these curriculum and activity books are available at public libraries.

Appendix IV

Storytelling for Children

Parents and caregivers can be selective at what types of literature they show their children. They can also tell their own stories to children. Here are some guidelines for telling stories to children:

Notes from Shedlock's: (1951). *The Art of the Story-Teller*. New York: Dover.

Elements to seek in material

1. "Experience has taught me that for the group of normal children, irrespective of age, the first kind of story suitable for them will contain an appeal to conditions to which the child is accustomed. The reason for this is obvious: the child, having limited experience, can only be reached by this experience, until his imagination is awakened and he is enabled to grasp through this faculty what he has not actually passed through" (Shedlock p 66)

2. The element of the unusual.

3. the element of beauty..'not only in the delineation of noble qualities in our heroes and heroines, but in the beauty and strength of language and form' (p72)

Keep the interest of the child by comparing dimensions....with something which the child is familiar so as for narrative purpose the interest is not broken (p73)

A poem for the youngest children:

Milking Time

When the cows come home, the milk is coming;

Honey's made when the bees are humming.

Duck, drake on the rushy lake,

And the deer live safe in the breezy brake,

And timid, funny, pert little bunny

Winks his nose, and sits all sunny.

Christina Rossetti

Shedlock speaks of the 'literary superiority of the choice of words in this poem', in contrast to the 'doggeral verse' usually offered to small children. (74-75) Further she explains,

'in spite of the simplicity of the poem, there is not the ordinary limited vocabulary, nor the forced rhyme, nor the application of a moral, by which the artist falls from grace' (p75)

"One of the most important elements to seek in our choice of stories is that which tends to develop, eventually, a fine sense of humor in a child" (p79)

Elements to avoid in material

1. Stories dealing with analysis of motive and feeling
2. Stories dealing with too much sarcasm and satire (Shedlock remarks here that she 'only want(s) to protect children from the dangerous critical attitude induced by the use of satire which sacrifices too much of the atmosphere of trust and belief in human beings(p.46))
3. Stories of a sentimental character (Shedlock uses as an example of a lady who put her love to the test by throwing her glove between a lion and a tiger. One boy after hearing the story questions the foolishness of the knights acquiescence and added: if she had fallen in and he had rescued her, that would have been splendid and of some use"(P48)
4. Stories containing strong sensational episodes ('avoid the shuddering tale of the wicked boy who stoned the birds, lest some hearer should be inspired to try the dreadful experiment and see if it really does kill'(p.51 Shedlock quoting Kate Douglas Wilson)
5. Stories presenting matters quite outside the plane of a child's interests, unless they are wrapped in mystery.('It is a matter of intense regret that so very few people have sufficiently clear remembrance of their own childhood to help them to understand the taste and point of view of the *normal* child.(p.51)
6. Stories which appeal to fear or priggishness(self righteousness, exaggerated correctness)
7. Stories of exaggerated and coarse fun. Shedlock refers to an article from Macmillan's Magazine Dec 1869 (!) 'A taste for buffoonery is much to be discouraged, an exclusive taste for extravagance most unwholesome and even perverting. It becomes destructive of reverence and soon degenerates into coarseness. It permits nothing poetical or imaginative, nothing sweet or pathetic to exist, and there is a certain self-satisfaction and superiority in making game of what others regard with enthusiasm and sentiment which absolutely bars the way against a higher or softer tone.'
8. Stories of infant piety or death
9. Stories containing a mixture of fairy tale and science

Lack of humor stifles imagination (p55)

Appendix V.

This story is a great example of introducing the concept of validating multiple perspectives in a conflict

The Story of Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, Retold Through Negotiation

Step 1: Agree To Negotiate

RED: I'm Red Riding Hood. I agree to take turns talking and listening and to cooperate to solve the problem.

WOLF: I'm the Wolf. I agree to take turns talking and listening, and I agree to cooperate with you, Red Riding Hood, to solve the problem.

Step 2: Gather Points of View

RED: I was taking a loaf of fresh bread and some cakes to my granny's cottage on the other side of the woods. Granny wasn't well, so I thought I would pick some flowers for her along the way.

I was picking the flowers when you, Wolf, jumped out from behind a tree and started asking me a bunch of questions. You wanted to know what I was doing and where I was going, and you kept grinning that wicked grin and smacking your lips together. You were being so gross and rude. Then you ran away. I was frightened.

WOLF: You were taking some food to your grandmother on the other side of the woods, and I appeared from behind the tree and frightened you.

RED: Yes, that's what happened.

WOLF: Well look, Red, the forest is my home. I care about it and try to keep it clean. That day, I was cleaning up some garbage people had left behind when I heard footsteps. I leaped behind a tree and saw you coming down the trail carrying a basket of goodies. I was suspicious because you were dressed in that strange red cape with your head covered up as if you didn't want anyone to know who you were. You started picking my flowers and stepping on my new little pine trees.

Naturally, I stopped to ask you what you were doing. You gave me this song and

dance about going to your granny's house
with a basket of goodies.

I wasn't very happy about the way you
treated my home or me.

RED: You were concerned when you saw me in a
red cape picking your flowers. You stopped
me and asked me what I was doing.

WOLF: That's right.

RED: Well, the problem didn't stop there. When
I got to my granny's house, you were disguised
in my granny's nightgown. You tried
to eat me with those big ugly teeth. I'd be
dead today if it hadn't been for the woodsman
who came in and saved me. You scared
my granny. I found her hiding under the bed.

WOLF: You say I put on your granny's nightgown
so you would think I was your granny, and
that I tried to hurt you?

RED: I said you tried to eat me. I really thought
you were going to eat me up. I was hysterical.

WOLF: Now wait a minute, Red. I know your
granny. I thought we should teach you a
lesson for prancing on my pine trees in
that get-up and for picking my flowers.
I let you go on your way in the woods,
but I ran ahead to your granny's cottage.

1-2

When I saw Granny, I explained what
happened, and she agreed that you needed
to learn a lesson. Granny hid under the
bed, and I dressed up in her nightgown.
When you came into the bedroom you saw
me in the bed and said something nasty
about my big ears. I've been told my ears
are big before, so I tried to make the best of
it by saying big ears help me hear you better.
Then you made an insulting crack about
my bulging eyes. This one was really hard
to blow off, because you sounded so nasty.
Still, I make it a policy to turn the other
cheek, so I told you my big eyes help me
see you better.

Your next insult about my big teeth really
got to me. You see, I'm quite sensitive about
my teeth. I know that when you made fun
of my teeth I should have had better control,
but I leaped from the bed and growled
that my teeth would help me to eat you.
But, come on, Red! Let's face it. Everyone
knows no Wolf could ever eat a girl, but

you started screaming and running around the house. I tried to catch you to calm you down.

All of a sudden the door came crashing open, and a big woodsman stood there with his ax. I knew I was in trouble . . . there was an open window behind me, so out I went. I've been hiding ever since. There are terrible rumors going around the forest about me. Red, you called me the Big Bad Wolf. I'd like to say I've gotten over feeling bad, but the truth is I haven't lived happily ever after.

I don't understand why Granny never told you and the others my side of the story. I'm upset about the rumors and have been afraid to show my face in the forest. Why have you and Granny let the situation go on for this long? It just isn't fair. I'm miserable and lonely.

RED: You think that I have started unfair rumors about you, and you are miserable and lonely and don't understand why Granny didn't tell your side of the story.

Well, Granny has been sick—and she's been very tired lately. When I asked her how she came to be under the bed, she said she couldn't remember a thing that had happened. Come to think of it, she didn't seem too upset . . . just confused.

WOLF: So you think it is possible that Granny just doesn't remember because she is sick.

Step 3: Focus on Interests

RED: I want to be able to take flowers to Granny when I visit her because she is lonely and flowers help cheer her up.

I want to be able to go through the forest to Granny's house because it is too far to take the road around the forest.

I want you to stop trying to scare me or threaten me in the forest because I want to feel safe. Besides, I think the forest is a fun place.

WOLF: You want to go through the forest to visit Granny who is lonely, and you want to feel safe because you think the forest is a neat place.

RED: Yes, and I want to take flowers to Granny.

WOLF: I want you to watch where you are walking

and to stop picking my flowers because I want to keep my forest home looking nice. I want the rumors to stop because I want people to like me, and I want to be able to enjoy the forest without being afraid that someone is hunting for me.

RED: You want the forest to be pretty, you want people who visit the forest to like you and not be afraid of you, and you want to be safe in the forest.

I-3

WOLF: Right, the forest is my home. I should be free to enjoy my own home.

Step 4: Create Win-Win Options

RED: In order to solve this problem, I could try to stay on the path when I walk through the forest.

WOLF: I could try to remember to call out when I hear you coming instead of quietly stepping out from behind a tree. I could plant some flowers over by Granny's house for you to pick.

RED: I could pick up trash I see in the forest and take it to Granny's trash can.

WOLF: I could check up on Granny to make sure she is OK on those days when you can't make it. She is my friend, you see.

RED: Granny and I can talk to the woodsman and tell him we made a mistake about you. I could tell my friends that I'm not afraid of you anymore—that you can be nice.

WOLF: I could meet your friends on the edge of the forest and show them through it.

Step 5: Evaluate Options

WOLF: Do you think if you tell the woodsman and your friends that you made a mistake about me and that I'm really nice, then I won't have to worry about the woodsman and his hunters catching me?

RED: I think that will work.

WOLF: Maybe I could go with you to talk to the woodsman.

RED: Yes, that would help. You could also go with me when I tell my friends I'm not afraid of you anymore. . . . I'd like to help you plant some flowers at Granny's, and I could also help you plant some in the forest. It would be nice to visit Granny together. She's pretty lonely.

WOLF: That sounds good.

RED: I agree.

WOLF: I don't think it will work for you to stay on the path all the time. I can show you where to walk so you don't harm anything.

RED: I think that's fair.

WOLF: I agree.

RED: Will it work for you to check on Granny when I can't visit her?

WOLF: Yes, if you call me early in the morning.

RED: I think it would be a good idea if I ask my friends for a donation when you give them a tour of the forest, and we could use the money to buy more trees to plant and start a recycling program for the trash we pick up.

WOLF: I think we've taken care of both of our interests.

RED: This solution will help both of us.

Step 6: Create an Agreement

RED: I'll arrange for Granny and myself to talk to the woodsman. I'll try to get an appointment for this afternoon, and I'll let you know when.

WOLF: I'll get some flowers to plant at Granny's. I'll have them ready to plant Saturday. I'll draw up a possible forest tour map and give it to you.

RED: As soon as I get your tour map, I'll bring some friends over to try it out. That's when I'll introduce you and tell them you're nice.

I-4

WOLF: I'll put a donations box at the edge of the forest for our tree planting and recycling program.

RED: And I'll call you by 7 o'clock if I can't go visit Granny.

WOLF: OK. I've agreed to get flowers to plant by Saturday, to draw a tour map of the forest, to go along with you to talk with the woodsman, to meet your friends and lead a tour through the forest, to take care of the donations box, and to visit Granny when you can't do it.

RED: I've agreed to arrange for an appointment with Granny and the woodsman, to plant flowers with you, to bring my friends to tour the forest and introduce you as a nice Wolf, and to call you by 7 o'clock if I can't visit Granny.

(The two shake hands.)

Source: Bodine, R., D. Crawford, and F. Schrumpf. 1994.
Creating the Peaceable School: A Comprehensive Program
for Teaching Conflict Resolution. Champaign, IL: Research Press, Inc., pp. 102–104,
106, 108, 110, 112. Reprinted with permission of the authors and Research Press, Inc.