

### Helping Children solve Classroom Conflicts Constructively

Akanksha Dwivedi\*

*“Teacher, he won’t share his pencil.”*

*“Teacher, she is not playing with me.”*

*“Teacher, he said bad words to me.”*

Classroom learning is always marked by minor instances of conflicts among children, especially, at the primary and pre-primary stage. Therefore, teachers need to play the role of peacemakers or pacifiers, apart from being facilitators of knowledge. They closely interact with children on a regular basis, and in the process, try to make them understand the nature of a conflict and that they should desist such situations. Children must be taught to become peacemakers and channelise their anger, leading to the resolution of a conflict. It is necessary for a teacher, parent and student to understand that conflicts can be managed constructively.

As a teacher for many years, I have had the opportunity to closely interact with children, particularly, at the primary stage. On many

occasions, I had to look into student conflicts and perform the role of a pacifier. I encouraged the young learners to resolve their conflicts independently without causing any sort of physical harm to each other and be friends without holding on to any kind of bitterness or grudge. Making the young learners understand that holding on to anger causes stress has been difficult. But many children became adept at resolving their conflicts independently and channelising it constructively by merely following a few ways like preventing the occurrence of a conflict in the first place, etc.

Moreover, I observed that teachers need to teach children to stay calm in challenging situations. In case of conflicts, they must communicate directly with each other instead of going to the teachers to complain or for redressal. Such an exercise helps promote self-confidence, cooperation and communication skills in the young learners. Since the children become

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\* Former Teacher, S. D. Public School, Pitampura, New Delhi.

active listeners, they choose their words carefully and communicate accordingly. After listening to each other, they even propose solutions and agree to try out a solution. The tenets of compassion and empathy make the young learners 'innocent' and different from adults.

Inculcation of such approaches transforms the young learners into problem solvers. In the process of conflict resolution, they learn to take responsibility for dealing with or handling difficult situations.

Life at school becomes easier when students and teachers use the same set of negotiation and protocol, i.e., ways to manage and resolve conflicts. Being a facilitator, a teacher must implement measures to make the classroom environment joyous, and the teaching-learning process interactive, participatory and fun. Apart from imparting textual knowledge to students, teachers are

also responsible for shaping their behaviour. When a conflict is resolved constructively, the bond between students is also strengthened.

The dominant problem in conflict management or resolution is that many students at the primary stage lack the required skills, and thus, seek help of elders around. In case of a school, it is the teachers, who they turn to.

In India, students from diverse social, cultural, ethnic, economic and linguistic backgrounds come together to study under a common roof in schools. But diversity should not be treated as a problem but as an opportunity. However, due to such a scenario in the classroom, a child tends to get involved in conflict(s). By exercising effective communication skills, practising restraint and controlling their anger, they can resolve conflicts easily.