



Lyon County - O'Brien County - Osceola County - Sioux County

CLIPPINGS

A Weekly Column from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

Week of December 10, 2018
For Immediate Release

Developing Conflict Resolution Skills

Lori Hayungs, Human Sciences Specialist, Family Life

One of the goals many parents have for their children, is to watch them grow into independent young people. Independence, however, comes with its own set of challenges. Children, from a young age, want to do things "on their own." Watching a crawler learn to stand, or perhaps even take a step is exciting. Mastery of skills along with independence is achievable and requires parents to practice some patience.

As young children are learning independence, there is the potential for conflict. Conflicts are a normal part of everyday living. Although we usually think of conflicts as very negative, conflict can also be positive because it can help us grow and develop skills.

The ability to resolve conflicts is learned. Parents, as the first educators of their children, can foster an environment of learning and discovery that can include healthy resolution of conflict. It is true that developing the skill to resolve conflicts comes with age. We must think in terms of readiness. Two-year-old children may not readily understand how to resolve conflict, but over time, can learn problem-solving techniques. Helping youth to recognize opposing points of view is important; as is learning that actions have consequences.

When children learn that their behavior has direct impact upon others, they learn to manipulate situations in both good and bad ways. Helping children to identify solutions to conflict is important. Parents can model good conflict resolution skills at home, so that children too, learn the skill and can practice it at home, school and into their future.

Talking through conflicts when they occur is a good way to make sure that something positive can come from the situation. Letting children explain how they see the situation and then making sure that all parties listen to all sides is the first step in creating peace in the situation.

Additional information for parenting preschool and elementary children can be accessed at <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/scienceofparenting/guidance/preschool-elementary/>.

Resources for guiding teens can be accessed at <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/scienceofparenting/guidance/teens/>.