

Understanding Preschool Conflict

Developmental factors that influence how young children think about conflict and conflict resolution:

- Young children tend to focus on one thing at a time. The one thing they think about is often their own point of view. This can lead to their being unable to think about what they want and what someone else wants at the same time. And, when they are caught up in thinking about what they want, it is hard to think about a possible positive solution at the same time...
- Young children usually focus on the concrete and visible aspects of a conflict rather than on internal, less visible factors. The conflicts they have and the ways they think of to resolve them are usually based on concrete actions, materials, and physical features.
- It is hard for young children to figure out the effects of their actions on others in a logical way, especially when it comes to thinking about the consequences of their behavior in advance.
- Young children have a hard time working out how to get from one state of affairs to another — making the transformation from a conflict to a positive solution. To do this requires such skills as thinking about more than one thing at a time, planning actions in advance, and taking two points of view into account.

