

Creating a Peaceful Village

Practical Steps for Mediation

By resident education specialist **Perk Musacchio**

“MOM, he hit me!”

“MOM, she took my favorite sweater!”

“DAD, he won’t let me sit by the window!”

The whining and tattling can sometimes go on and on and can be exhausting. *Let There Be Peace On Earth* was a song that you may have heard last month. However, wouldn’t it be wonderful if there was peace in our village and homes every day?

There will always be times when people do and say things that are insensitive or are taken in a different way than intended. Often, the offender thinks something is funny, and in reality, the receiver has a totally different perspective.

Understanding, recognizing, and solving problems that develop from misunderstandings or misperceptions are critical life-long skills. As adults, our job is to help children learn how to communicate their feelings and be assertive in positive and respectful ways. This takes intentional and purposeful conversations, modeling, and reinforcing appropriate behaviors.

If your child shares a situation in which s/he felt hurt or upset, it is important to help your child process the event. For example:

Tell me what happened. What happened right before that? What happened right after that? Has this happened before? Same behavior? Same person? Clarify frequency and severity.

How were you feeling during the situation? How do you think the other person felt? What part of the situation was a problem for you? Tell me what that looks like/sounds like.

What would the other person’s story sound like or how might it be different from yours?

What have you said to the person to let him/her know how you feel?

What have you tried to do to solve the problem?

What steps could you take to solve the problem? (Have your child be specific and concrete with the answer.)

What problem-solving strategies have helped in the past?

Who could you ask for help? at school? at home? at other activities?

Using conflict resolution skills begins at home with siblings, cousins, and friends. Then as children get older and go to school, they will be able to use these skills to solve problems with classmates, future roommates, and eventually in relationships with teachers/professors, employers, co-workers, and family. Helping your children learn how to peacefully solve conflicts is a gift that you can give your children every day of the year.

Perk Musacchio is the creator of the PeaceWalk®, a conflict resolution mat, that can be purchased via the website www.skillstosoar.com