

## Counselor's Corner 12/16



I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas. I wish you many blessings during this Holiday season.

In this week's Counselor's Corner, I included more information and strategies for helping manage and deal with conflict. All students are learning how to problem solve solutions when issues arise with friends and family. It is so important to talk about feelings and brainstorm a variety of ways that we could solve future problems.

### Practice talking about feelings

Young children tend to react quickly to upsetting events. Being quick to frustration or engaging in black and white thinking and blaming are common reactions to friendship troubles with young children. They need to practice talking about their feelings in a healthy and calm way.

Teach your children to use "I feel" statements when upset with a friend. When kids learn to use these statements, they focus on how a behavior affected them without resorting to blaming.

### Practice brainstorming solutions

White it might seem easier to help children solve a problem by telling them what to do to fix it, kids become better problem solvers when they learn how to find solutions on their own.

Get a blank sheet of paper and markers in a variety of colors. Ask your child to describe what happened from start to finish from their point

of view. When they are finished, ask them to pick a color and brainstorm three possible solutions to the problem that might work for them. Next, ask them to step into their friend's shoes and try to retell the story from their perspective. Ask your child to choose a color that represents their friend and brainstorm three possible solutions that might work for their friend. Then ask your child to look for the common ground. Is there a solution that might work for both? Think of three more solutions that meet in the middle.

By looking at the struggle from different perspectives, kids learn to empathize with their peers and look for solutions that help everyone involved.

### **Create a jar of problem-solving sticks**

Write down problem-solving solutions on popsicle sticks and store them in a mason jar. The next time your child struggles to come up with a workable solution to solve a problem with a peer or sibling, ask them to look through the jar and give one a try. By preparing kids with strategies to cope with these upsetting situations, they are better able to work through the obstacles and preserve their friendships.

### **Speak with actions**

Actions really can speak louder than words. In fact, what he chooses to do is often much more impactful than the words he chooses to say. Explain that just helping a friend in need, for example, is likely to communicate much more than his words ever could.

Ask your child to remember a time when someone else did something kind for them. How did this make them feel? Ask your child what the other person was saying with their actions. Challenge your child to think of ways they can communicate with others through their actions.

**Learn from mistakes, no matter who made them.**

There's no greater teacher than experience when it comes to communication skills. Encourage your child to think about how others have communicated with them in the past; ask them to talk about how it made them feel - both good and bad. Then ask your child to recall how they have communicated with others in the past and to consider what the results were. Were their actions and words worth repeating? Or were they something to avoid doing again?