

Conflict Resolution With Children

Get on their level. Sit or kneel so that you are eye-level with the children. It's difficult for them to focus their attention on someone 3 feet above them, especially when they're upset. It also signals to the children that you're there to help.

Clarify the disagreement. Ask each child to explain their side, making sure they both get a turn. Or, if their talking over one another, just re-state what you heard. "You both want to use the truck. You had it first, Jill so you think you should get to use it. But you think it's your turn, John?" Doing this lets the kids know you heard them and respect them. Initially, children will probably have a hard time staying quiet while the other person explains their view. Over time, they'll learn to trust that you'll give them both a turn to talk and will find it easier to listen to the other person.

Ask for ideas. "What could we do to solve this?" Give enough time for both children to come up with one or two ideas before moving on.

Decide on a solution. If the children don't agree on an idea, suggest one yourself. "Since neither of you like these ideas, how about if we..." Help the children follow through with the solution.

