

CARING DISCIPLINE

HELPING CHILDREN SOLVE DISAGREEMENTS

1. **Do not place blame or innocence on either child.** Focus on the fact that there is a problem both children need to solve. Be calm and friendly with both children.
2. **Reduce the stress level in both children so that they will be able to listen.** First, comfort the one who appears to have gotten the worst of it, then comfort the other one. Example: "I am sorry you are hurt, Annie." Then turn to the other child: "And you seem awfully upset, Roger." Put your arm around each child, if that seems appropriate for their age.
3. **Briefly describe the situation.** "I see two upset people," "Here are two people who want a turn."
4. **Prompt each child to use words to state the problem.** To Annie say: "Tell Roger what you didn't like." If Annie does not do this, model her part and say firmly, "I don't like it when you stop my swing. And I don't like it when you hit me!"

Then turn to Roger and repeat the process: "Tell Annie what you didn't like." Again, model for him if he cannot find the words.
5. **Prompt each child to use words to say what they want.** To Annie say, "Tell Roger what you want," and to Roger, "Tell Annie what you want."
6. **Help them figure out some kind of solution to try.** Say to them both: "Do you have any ideas for making it go better next time?" If they cannot think of anything, you can make a suggestion, but remember, they are the ones who must solve the problem.
7. **It is okay if an immediate solution cannot be found.** If so, you can end the conversation by saying, "Well, maybe later today one of you will have an idea."

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INNER AND OUTER REALITY*Helping the Child Cope with Painful Emotions*

CHILD'S OPENING REMARK	Outer-Reality Response	Inner-Reality Response
"Jane gets to go everywhere! I never get to do anything good!" (Stamps her foot.)	"Jane didn't get to do all those things either when she was your age. When you are her age you will get to do all the things she does. Anyhow, I think you get to do more than Jan got to do at your age!"	"I bet you wish you were the oldest one in the family..." (spoken with understanding, not as a put-down) or just a sympathetic look, and "Hmmm," or "Gosh!"
"I don't want to go to school anymore! I hate this dumb school! (Throwing school books on the floor.)	"But everyone has to go to school. It's the law! You just have to learn that everything in life isn't fun. I have to go to work, even when I don't want to!"	"Gosh, what a tough day you must have had!" or just a sympathetic look, and "Hmmm," or "Gosh!"
"I can't do it..." (Slumped shoulders and downcast eyes.)	"Of course you can! You are just as smart as anyone in this class. I'm sure you can get it. Just keep trying. Maybe you just need to work harder.	"You're feeling pretty discouraged today..." or just a sympathetic look, and "Hmmm, or "Gosh..."
"I'm never going to play with that stinky Ginny again!" (Frowning, with hands on hips.)	"Well you might be angry right now, but you'll get over it. Remember the argument you had with John last week? And now you are friends again."	"Something happened between you two that was really upsetting." or just a sympathetic look, and "Hmmm," or "Gosh..."
"There's nothing to do around here." (Drooping head and whining voice.)	"Have you thought about making something with the Legos? Or maybe you could see if Jimmy wants to come over. Or...how about helping clean up that garage?"	"One of those boring days..." or just a sympathetic look, and "Hmmm," or "Gosh..."

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OUTER-REALITY RESPONSE <i>Characteristics</i>	INNER-REALITY RESPONSE <i>Characteristics</i>
1. Closes the door to two-way communication.	1. Opens the door to two-way communication.
2. The adult does lots of talking (advising, analyzing, moralizing, criticizing, consoling, judging, ordering, questioning).	2. The adult does lots of quiet listening along with short verbal responses which clarify the child's feelings.
3. Insists on logic, reason, rationalization.	3. Accepts the fact that feelings often seem irrational or illogical.
4. Argues the child out of his or her feelings and makes judgments about those feelings.	4. Accepts the child's feelings-does not judge them.
5. Assumes the adult must take away the child's pain. The nonverbal message to the child is, "You aren't very strong. You aren't very capable."	5. Trusts the child to deal with his or her own pain. Nonverbal message to the child is, "You are a strong and capable person ."

If, after listening to your child, you sense he or she needs some help, you can ask, "Is there something I can do to help?" (Only agree to what you feel good about doing.)