

raising HAPPINESS



10 Steps to Peace in Your Household How to mediate when your kids are fighting

- (1) *Breathe*. We don't make effective mediators when we are angry or upset, so make sure you are calm before you begin.
- (2) *Address the situation*. Paradoxically, peacemaking requires confrontation. We often need to help arguing kids realize that they are experiencing a conflict that they need to resolve.
- (3) Now help them calm down and *gain some distance* from negative emotions. Conflicts cannot be resolved productively until the "heat" of the moment passes. One way to speed this process is to create a conflict resolution area or dedicated time that promotes calm. This can be a peace table, a talking stick, or a family meeting.
- (4) Have each person *state what they see as the problem* and what they themselves are trying to get. Each might describe something completely different—that is okay.
- (5) Have each *express their feelings*. How is the conflict making them feel?
- (6) Have them *state the reasons* that underlie what they want and how they are feeling.
- (7) Have each person *communicate their understanding of the other person's wants*, feelings, and reasons. At this point, the problem is now their common ground, and they can work together to solve it.
- (8) *Change the focus*. Instead of letting your little warriors continue to personalize the conflict, refocus them on the conflict itself. One approach is to write the problem down and have the kids sit down together facing it.
- (9) Ask them to *invent together three or more solutions* that meet the needs they expressed earlier. Note that this is not about having each come up with compromises—it is about finding the win-win.
- (10) *Agree on the solution* that maximizes people's benefits.

Shake hands or hug, and **go have some fun!**