

Conflict is Normal: Ages 6-9



With girls in this age group, conflict will show itself in words and mostly nonviolent actions such as excluding others from groups. Boys tend to have more aggressive behavior in play, so their conflict can also become aggressive. Adults don't need to step into every conflict situation, but ongoing interaction with children about their word choices and their actions is very appropriate.

What to Expect:

- This stage can be seen as one of serial best friends at first, but later they will widen their friendship group. This can cause issues when one child is left out or when friend changes happen.
- This stage is full of conflicts with others as children learn how to negotiate peer competition in sports, in the classroom, and even with adults.
- This stage is when children realize that they have opinions, that they start to make those opinions heard, and that—sometimes—those opinions differ from others' opinions.
- This stage can be hard on children as they maneuver new experiences. Success in these relational experiences leads them to feel competent, but failure results in feelings of inferiority.

How to help kids in this stage:

- **Perspective Taking:** Adults should help kids to see situations from others' perspectives by asking questions such as, "How would you feel if she had called you the name you called her?"
- **Expand Peer Groups:** Educators should assign seating in the classroom, assign partners for projects, and choose teams for sports. Parents can help by inviting classmates who are outside of their child's current "circle" to dinner or out for ice cream.
- **Pay Attention:** Adults should stay in close proximity of this age group as much as possible. While a little independence is good for them, peripheral monitoring of these children is necessary.

For more information about conflict and bullying, please visit:

<http://www.parentfurther.com/high-risk-behaviors/bullying/normal-behavior-vs-bullying-behavior>