

Conflict Resolution Tips

- If parents are angry, remain calm and maintain your composure (remember that you are the professional)!
- Listen to what the families have to say and let them finish before responding.
- Respect the families' concerns and strong underlying emotion—try to see the situation from the parent's point of view.
- Try to defuse the anger by accepting and acknowledging with active listening. You could say, "You're really very upset about..." or "I hear you saying..."
- Once families feel heard, you can respond being by being respectful, objective and compassionate.
- If families are verbally abusive, tell them you will set up a later meeting with them to talk about this issue when everyone is calmer.
- If you need to inform families of a concern about their child, start and end the conversation with something positive about the child ("the sandwich technique").
- Be careful not to blame the parent for the behavior and to re-affirm the families' role as their child's first and most important teacher.
- Express your concerns about the behavior constructively and ask families for their help to find solutions together.
- Schedule a follow-up meeting to discuss the child's progress.
- Refer the family to the appropriate community resource if needed.