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Spring 1997

Issue No. 61

Conflict Management

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Guest Editor: Marcia Abbo

Marcia Abbo has worked frequently with Head Start since leaving the classroom as a preschool teacher in 1976. As a consultant for Head Start, she participated in Head Start Peer Review teams and worked with such early Head Start demonstration programs as Project Developmental Continuity (PDC), Home Start, and the Child and Family Resource Program (CFRP). She was also a member of the Head Start Resource Access Project (RAP) evaluation team in the 1980's.

In 1992 and 1993, Marcia, along with Denise Woods and Loree Cook-Daniels, provided conflict resolution services to Head Start Region III grantees at the CAMEO (Creating and Managing Effective Organizations) follow-up management training. (See [page 4.](#))

Marcia currently operates Conflict Resolution Dialogue, a company that has developed a conflict resolution process suitable for Head Start programs. Conflict Resolution Dialogue uses problem-solving methods to transform difficult work environments into positive, productive workplaces. The company also offers training in team building, organizational management, and retreat facilitation.

Marcia has a M.S. in Conflict Management from George Mason University and a M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education from the University of New Hampshire.

CORRECTION:

An omission was made in the Head Start Highlights issue of the *Head Start Bulletin* No. 60, on page 4, top of left column, in the article "Head Start Initiatives." The bullet should have read: "A special new national program for Head Start Fellows was launched to support the development of a cadre of individuals with the experience and commitment to be future leaders in Head Start." The Bureau regrets the omission.

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Issue No. 61

Managing Change ... Managing Conflict

by JoAn Knight Herren, Chief, Technical Assistance & Training Branch, Head Start Bureau

"Effective management of Head Start programs depends, in large measure, on the capacity of key managers to work as a team. Expansion has offered an extraordinary opportunity to provide Head Start services to increasing numbers of children. At the same time, however, rapid growth has challenged Head Start programs to extend management systems, sustain quality and to rationally plan for continued growth...."

--David J. Lett, Assistant Regional Administrator, Office of Family Supportive Services, at the ACYF National Management institute, Summer 1991. (David Lett is currently Acting Regional Administrator of OFSS.)

In this period of rapid expansion of Head Start, and the expectations associated with that expansion, the ability of management teams to work together as cohesive units is of the utmost importance. Change is often a source of conflict, with individuals working to obtain new skills and understand new objectives as they continue to operate and produce under old systems and old rules. Important in this change is the commitment of Head Start to develop team processes that address the management of differences and do not overlook the stresses and strains which can be placed on program staff.

Head Start staff must strive to build trust among themselves, remove and reduce barriers that interfere with working together, and learn to dialogue in constructive ways. This, in turn, will have a positive effect on Head Start parents and Head Start children, and, by association, on the lives of those touched by these parents and children. At a time when it seems as though people in our society are losing the ability to settle differences peacefully, efforts at constructive negotiation for settling differences and disputes can have far-reaching influence.

The Head Start Bureau wishes to assist in this peaceful approach to conflict and confrontation with this issue of the Head Start Bulletin. Thanks to the efforts and expertise of our guest editor, Marcia Abbo, it contains insights, resources, information, and expert opinions on how to manage conflict, how to pursue mediation, how to improve communication among staff, and more.

Also, last October the Bureau issued a Program Instruction on mediation procedures for Head Start grantees, Policy Councils, and delegate agencies. The PI explained mediation; defined the Bureau's policy on mediation, including the circumstances under which grant funds may be used for this purpose; and listed mediation procedures for Policy Councils and delegate agencies. (For a copy of the PI [ACYF-PI-HS-96-16], fax your request to (703) 683-5769, or E-mail your request to: puborder@headstartinfo.org)

It is hoped that this Bulletin will assist Head Start staff in developing procedures and techniques for dealing with the conflict that is often associated with change, expansion, and the recent increased expectations of Head Start, a program that is fundamentally grounded in collaboration and cooperation within the larger community.

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How to Make a Bad Situation Worse!

To make a bad situation worse you must ESCALATE the conflict. To do this:

- Personalize it! Take it personally. Tell yourself "It's because I am a woman that this happened." Blame the other person and be negative: "He did that because he is so stupid."
- Expand, expand, expand! Exaggerate from a specific word or action to several larger, more general issues. Include incidents that happened long ago, and tack on everything that has happened since.
- Form armies! Tell others how you have been mistreated. Tell them your exaggerated story and get them to side with you.

How to Make a Bad Situation Better!

To make a bad situation better you must DE-ESCALATE the conflict. To do this:

- Focus on the problem, not on yourself, the other person, or on their personal attributes. Ask questions to gather more facts. Get clarification on anything you don't understand.
- Address the current incident only. Deal with your feelings and theirs. Listen to what they have to say. Remind yourself (and the others) of your shared goals. Focus on the future.

- Confine your discussion of the problem to the person(s) involved. If you need to ventilate or problem solve, talk to someone who can listen and help you to solve your own problems--someone you trust to keep your conversation confidential.

by JoAn Knight Herren

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More Than a Workshop: Raising Your Program's Conflict Resolution IQ

by Marcia Abbo, Mediator/Facilitator/Trainer, Conflict Resolution Dialogue, Washington, DC

A workshop is not necessarily the most effective way to raise a Head Start program's IQ (knowledge) of conflict resolution. That was evident when a conflict resolution workshop was pilot-tested before Head Start Region III's CAMEO (Creating and Managing Effective Organizations) management training conferences in 1992 and 1993.

CAMEO brought together grantee teams for group and individual discussions and exercises in the areas of team building, strategic planning, leadership, and conflict resolution. The workshop approach, however, was discarded during the planning stage in favor of finding ways to weave knowledge of conflict resolution throughout the activities of the week-long CAMEO.

As a result of the re-design, CAMEO integrated conflict resolution by creating opportunities for participants to talk about conflict, shift their understanding toward the positive aspects of conflict, and use strategies for dealing swiftly and constructively with problems.

Instead of the topic being avoided, CAMEO participants learned firsthand that conflict could be openly talked about as a natural part of any group experience. They also learned that problem-solving techniques could replace inappropriate uses of both avoidance and power-based approaches to handling conflict in the workplace.

Some of the strategies used to raise the conflict resolution IQ at CAMEO included:

- Having a professional conflict resolution specialist available for training, technical assistance, and crisis invention.
- Placing quotations and cartoons emphasizing the positive nature of conflict throughout CAMEO notebook materials and in meeting rooms.
- Distributing handouts, some with strategies for a specific problem, such as the Conch Shell Discussion (see [page 5](#)); other encouraging participants to "try out" new behaviors during their group discussions, like TODAY PRACTICE: "Everyone else is right."
- Providing a conflict resolution bibliography and selected books and videos to spark staff team discussions.

The underlying problem to be addressed in conflict resolution is that the societal view of conflict is negative. (Quick: What are the first three words you associate with conflict?) The negative view leads to the use of ineffective strategies which only postpone the inevitable or create resentful "losers" who become more interested in retaliation than co-operation. But changes of attitude take time.

Changing the disputing behavior to be more constructive involves more than teaching new skills in a workshop. It requires shifting underlying beliefs about conflict. For that to happen, people need to understand that conflict is a normal and natural process and that can be useful in many ways.

Since conflict resolution IQ depends as much on learning a new attitude as on learning skills, Head Start directors can take many steps to shape staff's new attitudes toward conflict and conflict resolution. (See [page 5](#) for ideas.) By providing a larger learning context for the occasional training workshop on conflict resolution, they will also be maximizing the program's investment of time and money.

Raising a program's conflict resolution IQ is an ongoing process, which is also greatly enhanced when an organization's policies and procedures support the constructive resolution of conflict. (See [page 5](#) for more details.)

Conflict Resolution Dialogue, 5332 Nevada Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20015. (202) 362-4173. E-mail: MAabbo@aol.com

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So how can a Head Start director raise the conflict resolution IQ of his or her program?

INSPIRE WITH INSIGHTS, REMINDERS, MAXIMS: Post phrases, quotations, cartoons, and pictures as reminders of good conflict resolution habits on bulletin boards and walls wherever staff congregate; distribute relevant articles found in newspapers and magazines; make buttons for staff to wear ("Apprentice Problem Solver"); insert an insightful quote regularly in paycheck envelopes.

ENCOURAGE "Skill of the Month" Activity: Since new behavior is reinforced when everyone focuses on it at the same time, staff can select one specific conflict resolution skill to work on each month, such as paraphrasing, calming down, brainstorming, naming one's feelings, responding to anger or frustration.

ENCOURAGE REFLECTION: Encourage individuals to reflect on their personal behavior (such as those behaviors listed above) in private journals. Use this activity as a positive focus when discussing team relationships.

OPEN UP DISCUSSIONS: Supply staff with a video on personnel management, and facilitate a follow-up discussion on conflict resolution topics, such as conflict de-escalation techniques, family origins of conflict styles, community mediation resources.

MODEL PROPER BEHAVIOR: Be a good model of any attitude or skill you support before suggesting it to others. Nothing is more persuasive to staff than your own commitment to, and personal observance of, raising your conflict resolution IQ.

START SMALL: "People don't resist change," it is said, "...they resist being changed." Allow for different levels of readiness and acceptance of this shift in thinking. Set the stage for resolving conflict in every possible way but allow everyone to find her own way in her own

time. A small group of staff can pursue the subject in more depth as long as their goals remain connected with the goals of the entire staff.

INFLUENCE THE ORGANIZATION: Finally, consider how you could exert your own influence on resolving conflicts at organizational levels as follows:

- **Build in rewards and punishments:** What type of disputing behavior gets rewarded by your program? Are those who sweep problems under the rug until they spill over into everyone's work ever helped to see the effects of their "avoidance?" Do those who "name" a problem get treated as if they created the problem instead of appreciated for their courage in bringing it to the surface?
- **Look at who you hire:** Does the program hire problem solvers? How well do job candidates understand the nature of conflict and can they demonstrate experience working cooperatively with others to solve problems? Could your job descriptions be written to emphasize a desire for such abilities as listening, flexibility, priority setting, and handling emotions, along with other related skills?
- **Plan for "outbreaks":** Are you prepared to handle simmering staff tensions that could erupt? What support can you count on? How can you prevent future eruptions? Since we learn best experientially, a crisis can be an unparalleled learning opportunity when it is handled constructively.

TRY THESE ...

Techniques for equalizing participation in discussions:

Conch Shell Discussion (Makes people conscious of when they interrupt others) Members of the group may speak only when they hold the conch shell (or almost any object that is distinctive and won't be lost or forgotten). Speaker passes shell to the next person who wants to speak. A group may want to exempt a facilitator from this rule.

Matchstick Discussion (Places limits on overeager speakers and encourages shy people to contribute) Each participant has an equal number of matchsticks (paper clips, slips of paper). Each time someone speaks s/he throws a matchstick into the center of the group. When one's matchsticks are gone, s/he may not speak again until all matchsticks have been used, or a new process has been agreed upon. People may not give their matches to other members.

--Excerpted from *Resource Manual for a Living Revolution*, Coover, et al, Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1977.

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Mediation: Turning "Win/Lose" Battles into "Win/Win!" Solutions

by John Settle, Chair, Departmental Appeals Board, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC

Scenario: A Head Start grantee agency is at odds with the Policy Council, which refuses to approve the grantee's refunding application. The Head Start director, stuck in the middle and viewed with suspicion by the parents, feels isolated and close to burnout.

Sound familiar? At the Departmental Appeals Board (DAB), we see dozens of Head Start cases in this very situation. These cases can be nightmares for the parties involved, with highly adversarial hearings lasting weeks, stacks of evidence, huge costs (in money and personal time expended), and escalating bitterness. The well-being of the program's children often seems an afterthought.

There is a better way. In addition to providing a court-style process, which is DAB's primary job, we also offer professional mediation and facilitation services to assist parties in engaging each other in a different way. Mediation uses a trained, outside party to help parties in a dispute communicate better--openly, respectfully, and confidentially--and to identify mutually acceptable solutions. The process is voluntary and the participants lose no rights to continue with litigation if the case cannot be resolved.

Consider two real cases which were similar to the above scenario:

Case #1: In 1994, in a Southwestern city, a dispute festered for months until ACF notified the grantee of ACF's decision to deny refunding. This initiated an appeal with much record development, leading to a very adversarial hearing lasting over two weeks, including testimony and cross-examination of more than a dozen witnesses. DAB issued the decision that one side had "won" and one side had

"lost"--although the time, expense, and hard feelings were probably shared equally by both parties.

Case #2: In a large Eastern city, the Regional Office offered the grantee, the director, and the Policy Council mediation, which was accepted. Over the course of a day, and during subsequent telephone calls over several days, the parties worked out a resolution to the dispute with the help of mediators, solving the matter in a way that both found acceptable. Among the solutions was a plan for specific communication enhancing steps for both parties.

Mediation worked in the second case for a tiny fraction of the pain and cost of the first case. The parties achieved a resolution of the case that was their solution, not one imposed upon them by an outside decision maker; the focus of the mediation was on the future, not the past; and, most importantly, the mediation helped keep the focus on the well-being of the children.

To use mediation, Head Start programs do not need to wait for a formal case to be filed at the DAB. It can be used any time for disputes at any stage. DAB can provide mediators or help parties to connect with a mediation service in local communities. To contact the DAB, call (202) 690-7006 for the names of mediators or mediation services in your community or for information on DAB conflict resolution training.

For additional guidance, refer to DHHS Program Instruction on Mediation, dated 10/4/96. For a copy fax a request to (703) 683-5769.

--*Departmental Appeals Board, DHHS, 370 Independence Avenue, SW, Room 637D, Washington, DC 22207. (202) 690-7006.*

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The Manager and Conflict Resolution

by Ijlal N. Haqq, Head Start Region Vb TASC Specialist, Center for Special Needs Population, Ohio State University, Columbus, OH

Conflict resolution is an essential skill for all managers in Head Start. As we embrace cultural diversity among staff and families, we must expect to encounter conflicting values, experiences, beliefs, and perceptions.

The manager's role isn't to eliminate all conflict, but to minimize the anger, grudges, hurt, and blame it can cause. Having systems in place for handling conflict allows programs to move on to the business of providing quality services to children and families--even when there are differences. Trouble does not arise because there is a conflict of values, beliefs or perceptions--a program is in trouble only when that conflict goes unmanaged or unresolved.

A conflict resolution system has four components that every manager should be familiar with:

1. Know your style of managing conflict and that a style can either motivate or discourage staff. (See sidebar.) This knowledge can make resolving conflicts more productive, and less stressful.
2. Use approaches to conflict which take the interests of both sides into account when fashioning an agreement, such as: getting agreement on the definition of the problem before trying to reach a solution; requiring mutual consent for any solution; encouraging negotiation first (the parties try to work it out themselves)--then, if necessary, providing third-party intervention (the parties seek a mediator); and avoiding the use of force, unilateral judgments, giving in, and doing nothing.

3. Develop a process for handling conflict. Identify who to go to, what steps to take, and expected outcomes.
4. Develop a procedure to follow, including establishing ground rules, purpose, roles, and a confidentiality policy.

Conflict resolution must be a cornerstone of Head Start's organizational structure. But it must be built on mutual consent and respect for the views of parents, administrators, managers, practitioners, and the community-all of which are needed for its success.

Adapted from Bill and Cher Horton's The Manager's Short Course: A Complete Course in Leadership Skills for the First Time Manager, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1992.

Is your style of managing conflict effective? The following styles can all be appropriate in certain situations, but should be evaluated in each case to see if they are producing the desired results.

ACCOMMODATING: This style uses collaboration and cooperation to arrive at a mutually satisfying resolution of a conflict concerning the interests of all parties involved.

AVOIDING: An avoidance style is uncooperative and might take the form of postponing an issue until a better time, or simply withdrawing from the situation (emotionally, physically, or intellectually).

COLLABORATING: Collaboration is a cooperative style which searches for mutually satisfying solutions. Can take the form of demonstrating team unity, agreeing not to compete, and finding creative solutions to mutual problems.

COMPETING: An aggressive and uncooperative style, competition is the opposite of accommodation. A "competitor" can often pursue his/ her views at another's expense.

COMPROMISING: This cooperative style involves finding mutually acceptable solutions that partially satisfy the parties involved.

Source: Kenneth W. Thomas and Ralph H. Kilmann's "The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument," XICOM, Inc., Tuxedo, NY, 1974.

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Leaders as Peacemakers

*by Beverly Turnbo, ACF Regional Administrator and Mediator, Region VIII Denver, CO,
 and Kathy Fragnoli, Attorney/Mediator, Vie Resolution Group, Arlington, TX*

Think about someone you know who is a good leader. What are the qualities that make him or her stand out in your mind? What makes this person different from others? Have you known people who were good managers but not good leaders? Unfortunately, not everyone is a leader. How can the transition be made from being an effective manager to being an effective leader?

We know there are many good managers of our Head Start programs. But some managers might focus more on the interests of a particular program, component, activity, or group; in other words, they fail to see the "big picture." Leaders are able to see how programs interrelate to better serve children and families. A leader is a visionary who can inspire others to work toward a common goal--in this case, improving the lives of children and families.

What are some other qualities that effective leaders have? Undoubtedly attributes such as honesty, integrity, trust, and respect for others may come to mind. Integrity and honesty must be valued as fundamental principles and, of course, every manager must be held to high standards. One way management can put these principles into practice is by keeping promises, fulfilling commitments, and being truthful. Confidence in management is directly tied to respect and trust, which is earned by consistently showing good faith over a period of time. A leader is also a peacemaker who seeks to bridge and negotiate conflicting interests.

Why is the ability to be a peacemaker important for Head Start? Why is it needed? If a program is well run, communities and parents will support the local Head Start program and invest themselves through volunteer efforts, donations, and community linkages. If it is not well run, that support will not be there.

How do we make sure a program is well run? First, we have to be peacemakers within and outside of our own agencies. How do we become peacemakers? We need to discourage adversarial approaches and relationships. We need to discourage "them" versus "us" attitudes, especially between Boards of Directors and Policy Councils. We need to reward peaceable efforts to reconcile differences and resolve conflicts, and focus equally on conflict prevention and conflict resolution.

There are simple ways to prevent problems with others and learn to be more tolerant of other points of view. These involve focusing on the results we want rather than on a process or on who is in control, who is right, or who is wrong.

We all see things differently because no one processes information in the same way, and because we are all motivated by different outcomes. But once we can acknowledge that not everyone will see things the way we do, tolerance of others is easier. In addition to being more tolerant, there are other skills a person can develop for dealing with others. One is to keep your opinion to yourself until you understand what the other person believes, and why they think the way they do. Another skill is to put yourself in the other person's "shoes" before criticizing their behavior.

Once your own behavior changes, people will respond to you in an entirely different way. Only by being more understanding and patient with others will we truly be able to prevent conflict.

While there will always be disagreements in any organization, a few simple changes in how we look at and respond to others can dramatically increase the quality of the workplace. And, more importantly, if we focus on the people we are serving (the children and families), the quality of the services we provide will increase dramatically as well.

"The best team doesn't win nearly as often as the team that gets along best."-Dr. Rob Gilbert

--ACF, Office of Regional Administrator, Region VII, 1961 Stout St., Denver, CO 80294.
(303) 844-3100.

--The Resolution Group, 1861 Brown Blvd., Ste. 601, Arlington, TX 76006. (817) 277-8850,
Fax (817) 277-1600, Mediation Scheduling (817) 882-8222.

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A Head Start Demonstration Project Using Conflict Resolution and Mediation

By Court Dorsey, Conflict Resolution Mediator/Trainer/Consultant, Wendell, MA

Conflict is a natural occurrence in healthy human interaction, but a violent response to conflict is destructive to children, adults, families, communities, collaborating organizations, and nations. Society has become increasingly aware of the cost of violence and the associated fear of violence in homes and communities.

In 1991, the Parent Child Development Center (PCDC) in Greenfield, Massachusetts, was awarded a three-year Family Support Demonstration Grant to collaborate with Franklin Mediation Service, a community mediation organization, to integrate conflict resolution and mediation into its Head Start program. During the next three years, project coordinators worked with parents, teachers, and staff to bring conflict resolution skills to the entire Head Start community.

All teachers and staff received at least six hours of training in basic conflict resolution. Mediation was offered to parents and staff. All family advocates, as well as other staff and parents, received full mediator training. One half of the program's parents attended parent training, and an age-appropriate curriculum was developed for use in the classrooms. In addition, the program stressed bias awareness, male involvement, and community networking.

The project developed a mutually reinforcing system so that the same skills of communication and conflict resolution given to staff were also given to parents and children. As a result, what the children learned in the classroom was reinforced at home. When Head Start family advocates dealt with family issues on home visits, they could informally mediate disputes in a language already familiar to the parents. More difficult situations were referred to formal mediation, where the process was also familiar.

In addition to teachers learning good preparatory problem-solving skills in the classroom, they could recognize signs of conflict in the children and families and could bring the concerns to team meetings, or recommend the mediation process to parents directly.

Since the demonstration project concluded in 1994, efforts have been underway to build a collaborative relationship between community mediation organizations and Head Start programs nationwide. As a next step in this process, funding is being sought to replicate and adapt this program in pilot sites in ten culturally diverse Head Start environments.

For more information about this Head Start conflict resolution project, write to the National Association for Community Mediation (NAFCM), 1726 M Street, NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036-4502. (202) 467-6226.

"Peacemaking occurs as differences in perception become a source of curiosity--not conflict."
--Lynn Sandra Kahn

Court Dorsey is a mediator, trainer, consultant, and theater artist, and was co-coordinator of the PCDC Head Start Mediation Project. His address is 121 Montague Road, Wendell, MA 01379. (508) 544-6978.

THROUGHOUT THE BULLETIN ARE SAMPLES OF VISUAL FIGURES DEMONSTRATING HOW TWO DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS CAN OCCUR OF THE SAME THING. LIKE THE READER'S EXPERIENCE WITH THESE FIGURES, PEOPLE IN DISPUTE USUALLY SEE THE SAME THING DIFFERENTLY AND USUALLY ONLY SEE THEIR OWN VIEWPOINT AT FIRST.--Figures from Creative Conflict Solving For Kids, Grades 5-9, by Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman. Peace Education Foundation, Inc., Miami Beach, FL, 1985, 2nd ed.

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TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More

by John Thomas, Region VIII TASC, Community Development Institute, Lakewood, CO

When a Head Start center director asked for help from the Region VIII TASC, he had already tried a number of conflict resolution approaches to deal with growing tension among his staff. As the conflict escalated, however, he felt a need for outside help, which led to an organizational assessment.

With input from the Regional Office, and assistance from the RAP and consultants, the TASC conducted a thorough assessment for the program. A week of individual interviews was held with the grantee board, Policy Council members, administration, staff, parents, and interested parties.

Information was gathered on what worked in the organization and what did not, as well as recommendations. It culminated in a final feedback session to get to the root of the conflict and to take positive steps forward. The group identified teamwork, conflict resolution, and communication as their top priorities.

The Head Start program has continued to work with the Region VIII TASC consultant, addressing and solving problems. The director reports increased productivity and improved services to the children and families. Stronger partnerships have developed among teaching staff. Above all, the working climate is now more positive and people are working together as a team. The consultant credits the director's willingness to tackle tough issues directly and the staff's dedication and commitment to build a better program for the children and families for helping with the resolution of the conflict.

The yearlong process has resulted in a conflict resolution "blueprint" (see [Guidelines](#) below) agreed to by the staff for handling problems as they arise between them.

--Community Development Institute, 445 Union Blvd., Ste. 230, Lakewood, CO 80228. (303) 989-5929.

"Guidelines"

BASIC GROUND RULES/ GUIDELINES FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- At the outset of the discussion, all parties shall establish that there is a real conflict that needs resolution.
- Specifically identify and define the conflict as seen by all parties, and evaluate the needs of everyone involved.
- Go to the other person(s) directly.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Each person will be reasonable and open-minded, and will be willing to talk, listen, and compromise.
- Focus the discussion on issues, not personalities, and address one issue at a time.
- Deal with the conflict as quickly as possible.
- Each party will take responsibility for their own problem and display adult behavior.
- Each party will give clear messages and will ask questions whenever clarification is needed.
- Conflict resolution discussions shall not be held until all parties can do so calmly.
- Before beginning, all necessary background information will be collected and shared with all parties.
- The goal of the discussion will be to seek a solution--not to win.
- Open communication should be practiced at all times; positive outcomes should be the goal.

- Children shall not be in the middle of the conflicts.
- All parties will establish good eye contact, and will use "I messages."
- Parties will establish future discussion dates as needed, and will be open to mediation if the conflict is not resolved to the satisfaction of everyone involved.
- Documentation will only be kept when formal mediation is needed. All parties involved in the formal mediation process will be provided with a written understanding of the discussion. At the end of the school year, if the conflict stays resolved, all parties will agree to destroy the written formal mediation records.

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LESSONS LEARNED

In the following Lessons Learned from Xanthos, Inc., Head Start center in Alameda, CA, Head Start Director Caroline Vance, Policy Council Chair Andrea Survill, and Executive Director Jon Schiller offer helpful ideas to Head Start programs for avoiding unnecessary upheaval which could lead to formal mediation:

HEAD START DIRECTOR:

- Do not hide issues, weaknesses, or problems. Put issues "on the table" for honest discussion and problem solving.
- Learn to agree to disagree. We don't all have to think alike.
- Do not shy away from dealing with difficult or unpopular personnel issues and decisions.
- Continue to discuss problems and resolutions. Do not pretend the issues did not occur.
- Board of Director and Executive Director involvement cannot wait until there is a crisis. There must be regular communication and support among these staff.
- Be aware that the outside community will have its own perspective so be prepared to answer the public's questions about the conflict.

- Separate friendships from business decisions. This applies to parents, Policy Council, and staff.
- Head Start dynamics are changing. Do not continue to do things just because they have always been done that way. Be willing to take an honest look at procedures, keep what is working, and change what is not.
- Giving in on some demands or needs that really are not crucial in the long run may help to show "good faith."
- An "outsider" coming in to assist with conflict resolution is only helpful when he or she gets to the root of the problem and the underlying issues that people may not be discussing.
- Determine the philosophy of the grantee and the program regarding parent involvement and the Policy Council.
- Do their actions match their philosophy?
- Be clear about the role of the Policy Council and parent committees. Provide thorough, ongoing formal and informal training. Be willing to revisit procedures.
- Know the regulations.

POLICY COUNCIL CHAIR:

To prevent conflict from escalating

- Listen to what is being said by all parties.
- Set up ground rules for handling conflict (in bylaws or standing rules).
- Communicate any way possible: one-on-one or through a third party, if necessary. If you are not being heard, sometimes it's easier to put it in writing.
- Have patience.
- Talk to your Board/Council and examine the issues. Ask: have we started talking about the real issues yet (the ones that are tucked away), or are we still peeling away layers of minor issues?
- Keep out of the "fight mode." Sort out the issues that are important to all parties and decide which are priorities. Agree on an overall goal-that of what is really important.

During mediation

- List your demands.
- Sit and talk and avoid yelling.
- Seek common ground with the other party.
- Listen and validate the other party's issues. It may not be an issue for you, but if it is an issue for someone it needs to be dealt with.

After conflict resolution

- Keep lines of communication open.
- Take small steps--don't overdo it.
- Work closely with the other party.
- Ask questions or admit it if you don't understand something.
- Don't be scared to say something even if feelings get hurt. Talk it out. Problem solve.
- Solve one problem at a time.
- Take time off.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

- Miscommunication and misperceptions among Head Start staff can arise from many different sources.
- Sometimes a crisis is the only way to accomplish meaningful change.
- Parent involvement must be a way of thinking and acting, not simply conforming to regulations.

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Conflict Resolution Strategies for Head Start Staff

by Derry Koralek, National Head Start Education Training Project, Aspen System Corporation, Rockville, MD

- The staff member in charge of supplies refuses a teacher's request for more paints and paper, saying, "The children in your class use too many supplies. If I give you more now, we'll run out before the end of the year."
- An angry staff member comes storming into the office, saying, "Who was handling the phones yesterday? I missed another important message."
- A staff member asks her supervisor to transfer her to another position, saying, "I'm tired of being bossed around. I have a brain, and I want to use it."

Have Conflicts like the above ever come up in your Head Start Program?

Whenever two or more people work closely together, conflicts can arise. Head Start programs may find it helpful to use conflict resolution strategies to define and resolve problems. Staff should use a strategy, revise it as needed, and evaluate its effectiveness on a regular basis.

Hopefully your program minimizes conflicts by using effective communication techniques. Conflicts are less frequent when staff work in collaboration with each other, communicate effectively, share responsibilities, and contribute to decision making.

Following are some effective strategies for preventing conflicts:

- Maintain a sense of humor. If you can learn to laugh at your own mistakes, other people are likely to laugh at theirs.
- Be an effective communicator. Choose your words carefully and monitor the quality of your voice. Avoid words such as "always" and "never," sarcasm, jargon, and talking down to people. Use an appropriate pitch, tone, and level when communicating with others.
- Assume that all people have positive, or good, intentions. When confused by another person's actions or words, ask yourself how you might feel or respond in the same situation.
- Use positive techniques to handle your own stress. Eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, spend time with family and friends, and have some fun. Avoid "treating" yourself to snacks filled with fat, salt, and sugar; watching excessive amounts of television; or abusing alcohol or other drugs. Negative ways of handling stress can lead to health problems.
- Avoid jumping to conclusions. Seek information about a situation or a colleague's action before making assumptions. There may be an explanation or legitimate reason why something did or did not take place.
- Create an environment that supports staff, as well as children and parents. Make sure staff have private places where they can store their belongings, comfortable places where they can take a break from their duties, and a schedule which allows them opportunities for meeting personal needs.

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INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT R. BLAKE

by Marcia Abbo

Robert R. Blake is chairman of Scientific Methods, Inc., in Austin, Texas and a pioneer in organizational dynamics. He is an authority on leadership theory and on promoting excellence in corporations through organizational management. He has served as an international consultant for governments, industries, and universities, and is the author of over 40 books. His publications include: *Solving Costly Organizational Conflicts*, with Jane S. Mouton (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1984); *The Managerial Grid*, with Jane S. Mouton (Houston: Gulf, 1964); *The Leadership of Corporate Change*, with Rachel McKee (Journal of Leadership Studies, 1993), and *Change by Design*, with Anne Adkins (Addison-Wesley, 1990). He is currently working on a book called *Systematic Change*.

ABBO: I understand that you have spent most of the past 30 years focusing on the breakdown of trust and cooperation between groups which need to work together?

BLAKE: Yes. Surprisingly little attention has been given to this situation in organizational excellence. How to restore trust is one of the great missing links in the chain necessary for increasing productivity, program quality, and morale.

Trust is the foundation of any collaboration. But once distrust appears, it makes cooperative behavior very difficult. Communication among groups becomes less direct, and a "we-they" mind-set feeds on distorted images of each other.

ABBO: Why does this mistrust happen?

BLAKE: It has its origins in the specialization of modern organizations. We have divided work into smaller parts so that people can focus on different aspects and become more expert.

But there is a price to pay--usually conflict--when the organizational components must reconnect and work together to achieve a goal.

ABBO: Why is intergroup conflict overlooked in organizations?

BLAKE: Teams that have trouble working "interdependently" can perform very well by themselves. And after a while a conflictual working relationship becomes accepted. Conflict does not usually stem from a single event, but builds up over a period of years--if not decades--as a history. Added to this is the phenomenon that relations among groups are generally resistant to change.

ABBO: Could you elaborate on the nature of these dynamics?

BLAKE: A loyalty to the group develops which can supersede logic. Group members develop a pride in group membership that distorts their objectivity. A "we-they" mind-set feeds on this distorted group identity. For example, group members are more likely to believe hearsay about the other group than have factual information.

A competitive mind-set will make the situation even worse, evoke more distrust, and increase the tension, hostility, and conflict.

ABBO: You mentioned the role of history in resistance to change. What does this mean?

BLAKE: A group looks to its past for stability and for help in measuring its accomplishments. Yet for all its contributions, a group's history is often a formidable barrier to effective resolution of inter-group conflict.

If groups traditionally resolve problems through win-lose situations, relying on power and authority or withdrawal, they are likely to repeat the same patterns even though the consequences are mutually destructive and undesirable.

ABBO: What is effective in counteracting these dynamics?

BLAKE: What is needed is establishment of new norms--a culture of problem-solving.

The mistake I have seen organizations make is trying to treat intergroup conflict with traditional strategies that are aimed at the individual; for example, by edict ("As of Monday morning, I want to see a change..."), by personnel rotation, restructuring, or agreements worked out only between leaders of the groups.

These conventional approaches fail and cause frustration because they do not penetrate the underlying dynamics, relieve antagonisms, or establish a basis for continued cooperation and collaboration.

ABBO: What can bring about meaningful change?

BLAKE: Conflict resolution is in the hands of the groups. Their participation must be voluntary and active. Groups must want to work on improving relationships. The process must allow the whole group to change together. It must foster direct dealing between groups in a problem-solving manner (finding the facts, uncovering the logic inherent in the problem, agreeing on sound solutions).

Finally, it is important that the groups envision the future "ideal" situation they want before

discussing the actual situation and its history. This sequence creates the motivation to change by freeing participants to imagine possibilities. They can finally "see" cooperative, collaborative effort as an alternative to their previous relationship.

ABBO: The delivery of Head Start services has always depended on the integration of services. But increasingly crucial to Head Start success are task forces, alliances of parents and staff, and interagency collaboration with community groups.

BLAKE: The need for teamwork between groups is growing, especially for groups in which neither has the authority to control the other, like components, centers, parents, and staff. But even groups in hierarchies must depend on working together, like executive directors, Head Start directors, Regional offices, and contractors.

ABBO: Thank you for sharing these insights with Head Start.

BLAKE: It has been my pleasure. I have no doubt that Head Start children and families will be the ultimate beneficiaries whenever resources are committed to the ongoing development of intergroup trust, cooperation, and teamwork among staff.

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5 Ways to De-Escalate a Conflict

by Johnnie Cain
Lead Management Consultant

The time will come when a problem with someone will need to be addressed. Don't wait too long to acknowledge that a problem exists--the earlier a problem is confronted, the easier it is to solve. Choose a time and a place to meet with the other person, and keep the following ideas in mind when meeting:

1. Keep your focus on what can be done in the future. **REMEMBER:** What's done is done.
2. Each person should take turns speaking. Listen carefully to the facts, and to the other person's feelings.
3. Resist the urge to bring more issues into the discussion, **REMEMBER:** You can take up another issue later.
4. Personal attacks and blame will only distract from solving the problem, **REMEMBER:** The problem is your enemy--not each other.
5. Be prepared to describe your feelings only and your impression of the facts of the situation. Don't speak for or about others.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services * Administration for Children and Families
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USING CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS TO RESOLVE A CONFLICT

1. **DEFINE THE PROBLEM:** Describe the problem and how it effects staff, children, and families.

EXAMPLE: Classroom team members are often late to work. They have excuses, but the rest of us have to complete our tasks. When the room isn't ready on time, we can't greet the children and talk with their parents.

2. **SET A GOAL:** Re-state the problem as a goal.

EXAMPLE: All team members will be on time so we are ready when children and parents arrive.

3. **BRAINSTORM:** Think of various strategies for solving the problem. Accept all suggestions without evaluating or censoring them.

EXAMPLE:

- Report people who are late to our supervisor.
- Have people who are late do all the clean-up at the end of the day.
- Set up a carpool with other staff.
- Attend a time management workshop.

4. **DISCUSS:** Review the proposed strategies and identify their advantages and disadvantages.

EXAMPLE:

- Report people:
Advantage: they might fear their supervisor so they will try harder to be on time.
Disadvantage: the ability for team members to work together could be damaged.
- Extra clean-up:
Advantage: other team members might feel the work is divided unfairly.
Disadvantage: the daily meeting would have to be delayed until everyone is finished with the extra clean-up, which could damage team work.
- Car pool:
Advantage: team members could save money and everyone would set to work on time.
Disadvantage: the daily travel time for team members might be longer.
- Workshop:
Advantage: team members could learn to manage their time.
Disadvantage: workshops take time and money.

5. **SELECT AND PLAN:** Choose a strategy to try. Develop a plan for implementing it. Include staff assignments and a time line.

EXAMPLE: Strategy: Attend a workshop on time management and organizational skills.

6. **EVALUATE:** Discuss the effectiveness of the strategy. If the problem is resolved, celebrate your success. If the problem remains, revise the strategy or select another from the list generated in Step 3.

EXAMPLE: Since attending the workshop, there have only been a few days when a team member was late.

As each member tries ideas from the workshop, they share how each one works for them.

Derry Koralek, National Head Start Education Training Project, Aspen Systems Corporation, Rockville, MD

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Preventing, Preempting, and Resolving Conflicts in the Workplace

By Christina Sickles Merchant, Dispute Resolution Practitioner, Designer, and Consultant, Arlington, VA

Like most businesses, Head Start programs already have dispute resolution processes in place for disputes like violations of equal opportunity and safety laws. The processes and procedures used to resolve these types of disputes are often spelled out by a law, a contract, or a regulation.

The focus of this article, however, is on the minor, low-level disputes and disagreements for which Head Start programs (and most other organizations) seldom have established dispute resolution procedures. Although these affect more people in the organization with greater frequency than, for example, an OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration) violation, low-level disputes are often overlooked by managers.

The result of failure to provide for low-level dispute resolution in Head Start programs can be uneasy relationships and a soured work climate, which can lead to a deterioration of the work environment. This impacts on the quality of work performance, work relationships, and productivity.

Providing procedures to remedy low-level disputes in organizations can also be a way to improve the delivery of services, overall workplace morale, and effectiveness in general. Developing an early intervention strategy for resolving minor workplace disputes, accompanied by preemption and prevention initiatives, achieves such results. The following steps introduce a framework for analyzing and addressing a Head Start program's unmet dispute resolution needs:

1: RECOGNIZE THAT AN "INFORMAL" SYSTEM IS ALREADY IN PLACE

As disputes arise and nothing is done about them, they may "go away" on their own (such as the individuals involved leave the organization or the work unit), or the unaddressed disputes may accumulate and grow into major problems.

2: ASSESS THE COST OF DOING NOTHING

The accumulation of unresolved grievances and low-level disputes can lead to a climate of disgruntlement and dissatisfaction, which becomes the accepted backdrop for the actual work of the organizational unit.

3: IDENTIFY THE CURRENT "CULTURE OF CONFLICT"

Where low-level resolution efforts are not encouraged or attempted, a culture of "dispute denial and avoidance" is created--often unwittingly. Thus, the messages informally circulated within the organization include the ideas that disputes are bad;" they must be ignored, avoided or denied; they do not warrant official recognition or attention; and they will get one in trouble. When combined with the reluctance which most individuals have for raising disputes in more formal and potentially risky forums, the product of such a "default" dispute resolution system is often dissatisfaction, dysfunction, and complaints. This culture of conflict must be changed for progress to occur.

4: COLLABORATIVELY ASSESS CONFLICT AND ITS COSTS

An assessment should be made of the number, types, and nature of disputes which occur at the lowest organizational level. Examples include personality clashes, inter-unit rivalries, professional practice disagreements, issues of nonperformance, and disagreements over the best methods to perform work.

It is important to include in the assessment process those who have different views of how dispute resolution efforts are currently conducted.

5: IDENTIFY CONFLICT MANAGEMENT GOALS

One positive result of a staff dispute assessment is that participants are often able to identify simple common goals. For example, co-workers might identify the need to reach a more common understanding and acceptance of conflict, how it arises, and how it can best be addressed.

Improving communication skills is also a very common goal, as is clarification of roles and responsibilities within the program. Targeting simple, clear, and measurable conflict management goals in a Head Start program is critical to any improvement effort. (See [box](#) below.)

6: COLLABORATIVELY DESIGN AN EARLY INTERVENTION APPROACH AND EVALUATE

With goals identified, and some conflict management research conducted, a Head Start design committee should develop initial processes and procedures to intervene early and preemptively in low-level disputes. An elaborate plan is not necessary. Start small with a tentative approach. Try a pilot combination of measures and assess whether it is effective. Always evaluate efforts and be prepared to adjust.

Continuously learning about how conflict is managed in a program is the key to success. A

one-shot examination/correction of dispute handling will not cure the problem. In fact, early intervention in the disputes of any organization, including Head Start, requires a long-term commitment to cycles of open, ongoing, and participatory inquiry about the status of conflict management and its contribution to the improvement of overall program performance.

-Christina Sickles Merchant is a dispute resolution practitioner, designer, and consultant for workplace disputes. Past president of the Society of Professional in Dispute Resolution and former federal mediator, she recently co-authored the book *Designing Conflict Management Systems: A Guide to Creating Productive and Healthy Organizations* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1996). Address: P.O. Box 10522, Arlington, VA 22201, (703) 593-3636; Fax (703) 243-9072; E-mail: cmerchant@worldnet.att.net].

References:

Constantino, C.A. and Merchant, C.S. *Designing Conflict Management Systems: Guide to Creating Productive and Healthy Organizations*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996).
Ury, W.L., Brett, J.M., and Goldberg, S.B. *Getting Disputes Resolved: Designing Systems to Cut the Cost of Conflict*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1988).

SAMPLE HEAD START CONFLICT MANAGEMENT DESIGN

by Christina Sickles Merchant

SAMPLE GOAL: IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN LEADERSHIP, STAFF, AND PARENTS BY:

- Holding in-service on communication skills emphasizing topics of active listening and giving/receiving feedback.
- Having in-service on effective meetings emphasizing group dynamics, self-facilitation, and task/process awareness.
- Creating regular (internal and external) forums for discussion of what is working in the program, what is not, and what actions need to be taken.

SAMPLE GOAL: IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING OF DIFFERENT HEAD START PROGRAM ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES BY:

- Initiating orientation of new members by staff sharing their roles and responsibilities.
- Assigning "program mentors" to new staff for a specific period of time.
- Having "job exchange" days, or something similar, so that staff can understand other jobs.

SAMPLE GOAL: CHANGE THE "CULTURE OF CONFLICT" IN THE HEAD START PROGRAM BY:

- Offering in-service on conflict management, linking program goals to the costs of conflict, and raising awareness of new initiatives/opportunities.
- In collaboration with staff, establishing a temporary structure, such as a joint committee, to solve program issues through the use of interest-based problem solving.
- Establishing an internal dispute resolution process which is written, widely disseminated, easy to access, and supported by leadership and staff. The objective is to support the resolution of low-level disputes by the parties themselves, facilitated by Head Start resources-- including trained staff.

- Building dispute resolution capacity by training selected staff in mediation and facilitation skills. They may then be used as solo or co-mediators in disputes which arise as a result of the new internal process.
- Establishing reward and recognition systems for those who have achieved some of the program's new conflict management goals.

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Conflict Management Organizations

The following organizations offer resources, referrals, assistance, training, and/or guidance in the resolution of disputes through the use of mediation and arbitration. Many have offices throughout the country which can be located by contacting the main offices listed below:

American Bar Association Section on Dispute Resolution
740 15th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20005,1009
(202) 662-1680
(202) 662-1683 Fax
E-mail: dispute@aba.net.org

American Arbitration Association National Headquarters
140 West 51st Street
New York, NY 10020
(212) 484-4000
(212) 765-4874 Fax

Association for Conflict Resolution
1527 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Third Floor
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 667-9700
Fax: (202) 265-1968
Email: info@acresolution.org
Web: <http://www.acresolution.org/>

CDR (Communication/ Decisions/Results) Associates
(Includes Center for Dispute Resolution)

100 Arapahoe Avenue, Suite 12
Boulder, CO 80302
(303) 442,7367
(800) MEDiate
(303) 442-7442 Fax

CPR Institute for Dispute Resolution
366 Madison Avenue, 14th Floor
New York, NY 10017
(212) 949-6490
(212) 949-8859 Fax
E-mail: info@cpridr.org

Community Relations Service
(An agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, as part of its Conflict Prevention and Resolution Program)
Headquarters Office
5550 Friendship Boulevard Suite 330
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
(301) 491-5929

Educators for Social Responsibility
23 Garden Street Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 492-1764
(617) 864-5164 Fax

Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (Labor and Management Disputes)
2100 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20427
(202) 606-8080
(202) 606-4251 Fax

National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)
1835 K Street, NW, Suite 715
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 785-9400
(202) 785-3385 Fax
E-mail: ncbiinc@aol.com

National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR)
(Includes the National Association for Community Mediation [NACM] and the National Association of Mediation in Education [NAME])
1726 M Street, NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036-4502
(202) 466-4764
(202) 466-4769 Fax
E-mail: nidr@igc.apc.org

Program for Community Problem Solving (A division of the National Civic League)
915 15th Street, NW, Suite 601
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 783-2961
(202) 347-2161 Fax

Harvard Program on Negotiation
(An educational program)
Harvard Law School
513 Pound Hall
Cambridge, MA 02138
(617) 495-1684

"In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity."
--Albert Einstein

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Slaikeu, Karl, *When Push Comes to Shove*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1995.

LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT

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Kotter, J.P., *The Leadership Factor*. New York: The Free Press, 1988.

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Senge, Peter M., *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. New York: Doubleday, 1990.

AUDIOTAPES ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION/LEADERSHIP

The Best of the Best Audio Collection. Jossey-Bass,

(Includes: *Getting to Yes*, *Excellence in the Organization*, *On Becoming a Leader*, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, *Talking from 9 to 5*, and more.)

Dispute Resolution/Dissolution Glossary

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). A term used in the legal community to refer to alternatives to litigation. This includes a range of nonjudicial processes for resolving disputes, particularly mediation and arbitration. The use of such processes has been motivated in recent years by the increase in court case-loads and cost of litigation.

Arbitration. A process for resolving disputes which may be binding or nonbinding. The fundamental difference between arbitration and mediation is that in arbitration the arbitrator makes the final decision. In mediation, decisions are made by the disputing parties.

Caucus. A private, confidential meeting between the mediator and one party to allow the parties to cool down, to gather facts, to clarify proposals, or to explore options.

Co-Mediation. In cases where a specific expertise would be helpful in resolving the dispute, or in cases involving multiple parties, it is not uncommon for two mediators to share the role. This is common in court mediation programs. Co-mediation is also used to model cooperation and gender/ race balance. Often mediators will co-mediate to further advance their skills.

Dispute Resolution. A term used to describe an array of methods used to resolve conflict.

Mediation. Typically a voluntary process in which a neutral third party, without any power to impose a solution or agreement, works with the disputing parties to help them reach a mutually acceptable resolution of their dispute. The term mediation is sometimes used incorrectly for arbitration.

Facilitation. The process of conducting the work of a group under the guidance of a designated person acceptable to all parties. A facilitator is responsible for keeping the group focused on the task, but has no decision-making authority. A facilitator often handles pre- and post-meeting tasks.

Negotiation. A process in which those having a dispute or problem try to reach a resolution or agreement by themselves before involving others.

Partial source: The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management

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"I Am Your Child" Campaign Goes Prime Time!

"I Am Your Child," an hour-long prime time special, is scheduled to air on ABC at 8.00 p.m. EST on Monday, April 28, 1997. Produced by Rob Reiner and Michele Singer Reiner, the program will feature music, comedy and a documentary created by New Screen Concepts about a community that has mobilized on behalf of young children and their families. The program will be hosted by Tom Hanks, and will feature Shaquille O'Neal and many Hollywood stars.

The television special is part of a public awareness and engagement campaign to focus on new and compelling evidence about the importance of the first three years of life. Prominent entertainers, media, foundations, corporations, and child development experts have joined forces in establishing and promoting the campaign, which will create an enduring collection of educational resources for parents, early childhood practitioners, and policymakers. The TV special will also include a toll-free number viewers can call to obtain a wide variety of resources and materials.

The "I Am Your Child" effort builds on research evidence presented in Starting Points, the 1994 Carnegie Corporation report that documents the substantial body of literature on young children emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and brain development. It concludes that "how children function from the preschool years to adolescence, and even adulthood, hinges in large part on their experiences before the age of three."

The report points out that our nation has inadvertently neglected these crucial years and that this neglect has led to a variety of troubling conditions that should be improved. Nationwide, many families with very young children do not have health insurance, child poverty rates are alarming, child abuse rates are high, and a substantial number of infants and toddlers are in potentially harmful child care situations. Parents worry about the amount of time they can spend with their families and about the safety and future prospects of their children.

The "I Am Your Child" campaign hopes to help reverse these troubling trends by:

- raising public awareness about the importance of the first three years of life;
- working with national, state and community leaders to improve programs and policies for young children and their families; and
- connecting families with young children to the information, resources and services they need.

For more information on the "I Am Your Child" campaign, contact the Families and Work Institute, 330 Seventh Avenue, 14th Floor, New York, NY 10001, telephone (212) 465-2044, fax (212) 465-8637.

Calendar--May 1997

May 24: Building Civic Democracy and Responsibility, Charlotte, NC, Contact: Anne Oliver, National League of Cities, 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, #550, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 626-3187; (202) 626-3043 Fax

May 3-10: National SAFE Kids Week, Contact: Geri Culpepper, National SAFE Kids Campaign, 111 Michigan Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20010-2970; (202) 884-4993; (301) 650-8038 Fax

May 6-7: High/Scope's Planning Ideas-Key Experiences All Day Long, Ypsilanti, MI, Contact: High/Scope, 600 North River Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898; (313) 485-2000, ext. 218 or 228

May 25-28: Association for the Care of Children's Health 32nd Annual Conference, Washington, DC, Contact: Innovisions Management Reservations, (800) 899-0573, or The Association for the Care of Children's Health, 7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 300, Bethesda, MD 20814-3015; (301) 654-6549; (301) 986-4553 Fax

May 20-31: National Head Start Association Annual Training Conference, Boston, MA, Contact: NHSA, 1651 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314; (703) 739-0875; (703) 739-0878 Fax; Conference Hotline (703) 548-0551

May 29-Jun. 1: National Multicultural Institute 12th Annual Conference: Sharing Power and Responsibility: the Transition to Pluralism, Washington, DC, Contact: National Multicultural Institute, 3000 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 438, Washington, DC 20008; (202) 483-0700; (202) 483-5233 Fax; e-mail: nmci@nmci.org; web: <http://www.nmci.org/>

For a more complete calendar listing, contact the Head Start electronic Bulletin Board System (BBS) at (703) 807-2312, or (800) 477-8278

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Resources

Resolving Conflict: Strategies for Local Government

by *Margaret S. Herrman*

This book will help resolve conflicts--from staff quarrels to community controversy to interagency disputes-- with skill and confidence. Includes sections on working with the public, proactive strategies for long-term success, making the most of meetings, and much more. Available from:

International City/Council Management Association

777 N. Capitol St., NE

Washington, DC 20002

(202) 289-4262

(202) 962-3659 for a catalog

(800) 745-8780

Conflict Management Video

This video will help train employees to resolve conflicts and improve work relationships before major problems get out of control and management has to intervene. Includes complete course materials guide. 23 min. Available from:

American Media Incorporated

4900 University Avenue

Des Moines, IA 50266

(800) 262-2557

(515) 224-0256 Fax

E-mail: ami@ammedia.com

UPDATE ON LAW-RELATED EDUCATION:

Conflict Resolution: What Are Its Foundations, Practices, Successes ... and Future?

This continuously updated periodical from the American Bar Association Section of Dispute Resolution contains articles teaching strategies, and student materials for the individual who is interested in conflict resolution education programs.

For a subscription, or for information on the organization, contact:

American Bar Association/YEFC

541 N. Fairbanks Court

Chicago, IL 60611-3314

(312) 988-5735

(312) 988-5032

(312) 988-5522 Customer Service

Web: <http://www.abanet.org/publiced/>

E-mail: abapubed@attmail.com

In addition to offering materials on conflict, the ABA Section of Dispute Resolution sponsors an annual national conference on children and the law.

"Anger does as much damage to the vessel it is stored in as it does to anything it is poured upon."

--Author Unknown

Growing Communities for Peace *Workshops and Seminars*

Growing Communities for Peace, a nonprofit organization, helps individuals, schools and communities develop skills and abilities to resolve conflicts. Also offers staff training and inservice, resources, networking opportunities, and a newsletter. For information on this organization, contact:

Growing Communities for Peace

16542 Orwell Road North

Marine on St. Croix, MN 55047-9754

(612) 433-4303

Lifesavers! Tips for Success and Sanity for Early Childhood Managers

by Sue Baldwin

Covers issues like stress, parents, staff disputes, and risk taking for early childhood managers.

Offers tips on how to cope with managing, whether a novice or a guru. 138 pp. #5313.

Available from:

Redleaf Press

450 N. Syndicate, Ste. 5

St. Paul, MN 55104-4125

(800) 423-8309

(800) 641-0115 Fax

Getting Disputes Resolved

by William L. Ury, Jeanne M. Brett, and Stephen B. Goldberg

Contains guidelines for designing a dispute resolution system to handle conflicts effectively and on a continuous basis. #URYGETA305. 226 pp. Available from:

Jossey-Bass Publishers

350 Sansome Street

San Francisco, CA 94104

(415) 433-4767

(800) 956-7739

Jossey-Bass has numerous resources on conflict resolution, management, and professional development. When calling to order, ask for a publications catalog.

ADDRESS CORRECTION: In Issue No. 56 of the Bulletin on Facilities, the address for obtaining the game from Region II RAP, called "The Road to Integrated Services," should be as follows: New York University, 239 Greene St., New York, NY 10003. The cost of the game is \$25. Please fax your request to (212) 995-4562.

The resources listed are not all inclusive and do not necessarily constitute an endorsement, real or implied, by the Head Start Bureau.

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Head Start Bulletin

Enhancing Head Start Communication

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services * Administration for Children and Families
Administration for Children, Youth and Families * Head Start Bureau

Spring 1997

Issue No. 61

Peaceful Conflict Resolution

- Respect the right to disagree.
- Express your real concerns.
- Share common goals and interests.
- Open yourself to different points of view.
- Listen carefully to all proposals.
- Understand the major issues involved.
- Think about probable consequences.
- Imagine several possible alternative solutions.
- Offer some reasonable compromises.
- Negotiate mutually fair cooperative agreements.

--Robert E. Valett

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