



# THE PARENTING CENTER

School District of  
South Orange & Maplewood  
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## PRESS

### The Parenting Center

The Parenting Center is proud to sponsor speaker presentations, workshops and support groups throughout the school year. Call the center for upcoming events. 973-762-5600 ext. 1850

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### Raising a Racially Smart Child

According to Dr. Robert L. Johnson, author of The Race Trap, we can help our children succeed in life by encouraging effective racial communication. In his book, Dr. Johnson outlines the steps parents can take in order help children develop racial intelligence:

Help kids understand the benefits of learning how to interact positively with people of other races. Explain that this will help them in the years to come, both in business and in life.

Help your child understand that there *are* differences between people of different races and cultures. Explain that people may act or see things differently depending upon cultural background and experiences. Explain that people are often treated differently depending upon skin color. Help him understand that no color is inherently better or worse.

Encourage your child to observe racial differences without making judgements. Encourage open and honest discussion (at home) about specific encounters she may have with people of other races. Explain that different opinions don't make one person right and another wrong. Model this behavior for your child.

Explain that people are more similar than they are different. Talk about the aspects of human life that are the same for everyone, regardless of race. For example, discuss the things that make all people feel happy, safe, sad, mad, or proud.

Help your child learn from each encounter. Talk about the ways in which your child can broaden his horizons by understanding the different ways in which people think and act.

Teach your child to look at situations through the other person's eyes. Explain that a person's cultural and racial heritage will often lead to experiences which are unfamiliar to others. Help your child recognize the reasons behind a person's thoughts and actions. Teach him to watch and to listen.

Talk about the ways in which your child can respond effectively to different situations. Help her figure out the techniques she can use to deal with different people and situations. Stress the importance of *thinking before reacting* in every situation.

### Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP). The basics.

RCCP is a national program designed to help kids resolve conflicts in a fair and non-violent manner. Here are the basics.

- ◆ RCCP is implemented in all of our district's elementary schools.
- ◆ RCCP teacher-mentors and parent volunteers are extensively trained in RCCP skills. They train students to be peer mediators.
- ◆ Basic RCCP training is offered to teachers for use in classrooms.
- ◆ Peer mediators are students who help students find solutions to school-time disputes. Disputes typically involve name calling or hurt feelings. Peer mediation is not a substitute for discipline.
- ◆ Peer mediators are always supervised by an adult.
- ◆ Kids involved in a dispute are never forced into peer mediation. It is voluntary. Kids usually find peer mediation helpful and non-threatening.
- ◆ RCCP shows kids that they have many choices besides passivity or aggression in dealing with conflict. RCCP seeks to empower kids with the skills to make those choices real.
- ◆ RCCP shows kids that they play powerful roles in creating a more peaceful world.

## PEACE IN THE FAMILY

*Most parents are frustrated by the arguments that commonly erupt between kids. Following are some ideas adapted from Siblings Without Rivalry, by Faber & Mazlish. These are the same skills that are used by RCCP-trained participants. For more information, see suggested reading.*

### 1. For mild bickering – Ignore it.

### 2. When kids seem angry or begin to raise their voices, you may want to step in. Here are some steps that might help:

- Tell kids “I see that you’re having a problem. I’d like to hear about it.”
- Listen to the first child tell her version of the problem. Ask how the problem made her feel. Paraphrase what your child has told you. Repeat with the second child.
- Summarize what you’ve just heard. Tell kids what you think the problem is, For example, “Ah, it looks like we’ve got two kids and only one t.v. Tough problem.”
- Tell kids you know they can figure out a fair solution to the problem, and leave the room.

### 3. For kids who are shouting and seem to be stuck in an escalating argument, you might want to do the following:

- Bring both kids into a different room. Listen to each child’s version of the problem, paraphrase, and summarize problem as above.
- Next, ask each child what he thinks he could do differently to solve the problem. Paraphrase what each child says.
- Help kids find workable solutions. Offer one or two you think will work.
- Congratulate them on solving the problem.

### 4. For arguments that are getting out of control:

- Tell children “ I see two kids about to hurt each other. It’s not safe for you two to stay together.” Send each child to a separate room for a cooling off period.
- After the cooling off period, do all of the steps listed under 2 & 3.

## More Strategies for Finding Creative Solutions to Annoying Conflicts.

Here are a few more ways that RCCP teaches participants to successfully solve disputes. You can use these methods with your kids, spouse, co-workers, relatives, etc.

### USE ‘I’ STATEMENTS:

- ◆ **I feel** state your feeling  
(confused, frustrated, angry)
- ◆ **When you** state the person’s behavior  
(interrupt, yell, play ball in the kitchen)
- ◆ **Because** state how the behavior affects you or the situation  
(I can’t work with so much noise.)

### USE ACTIVE LISTENING:

- ◆ **Look at the person who is speaking.**
- ◆ **Show by your tone of voice, your expression, and your “body language” that you are interested and want to be helpful.**
- ◆ **Don’t interrupt**
- ◆ **Accept the person’s feelings without judgement.**
- ◆ **Paraphrase what the person has said to be sure you understand.**
- ◆ **Don’t take sides.**

### Five Key Conflict Resolution Concepts:

1. **Conflict is a natural part of life.**
2. **We can learn skills to help us deal better with conflict.**
3. **There are many alternatives.**
4. **Sometimes we can all win.**
5. **The process of creative conflict solving is rooted in a deep of sense of respect for ourselves and others.**