Teacher’s Role in Creating A Culture of Non-Violence

Wilma Gold
Teachers Role in Creating A Culture of Non-Violence

- Review Conflict Resolution
- Anti-Bias Educational Goals
- When and How to Intervene
- Bullying
- Building Family Partnerships
- Collaboration
  - Administration
  - Colleagues
- Tools
Peaceful Conflict Resolution

The goal is:
To give children skills to manage conflict and creatively solve problems

NOT TO ELIMINATE CONFLICT!
Basic Steps to Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Assess

1. Calm children and acknowledge their feelings.
   “I can see that you are really upset.”
2. When the children are calm ask, "What is the problem?"
3. Continue by asking each child to express what they want or need.
   “Can you tell Sam what you need?”
4. State the problem clearly and non-judgmentally. "Both Sam and Bill want to use the shovel? Is that the problem?"

5. The children brainstorm ideas about how to resolve the conflict. "How can we solve this problem?"

6. Try the idea (take action.)

7. Evaluate.
1) Nurture each child’s construction of a knowledgeable, confident self-identity and group identity.

The teacher’s role is to create an environment where each child can discover and feel comfortable with who they are bi-culturally (home culture and dominant culture) in the classroom community.
2) Promote each child’s comfortable, empathic interaction with people from diverse backgrounds.

The teachers role is to guide development cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally to be curious about differences and to negotiate and adapt to them while seeing the common humanity in all people.
Anti-Bias Educational Goals

Foster each child’s critical thinking about bias.

The teacher’s role is to support children’s identification of “unfair” and “untrue” images, comments and behaviors when they see them and to ask the open-ended questions to support exploration of these concepts.
Cultivate each child’s ability to stand up for her/himself and for others in the face of bias.

- Stand Up – begin the journey on the path of “activism”.

- The ability to have empathy, to care for and about others and ability to stand up and speak up is predicated on a strong sense of self-identity, group identity and sense of belonging.

Anti-Bias Educational Goals
“Anti Bias Activism Project”
Ann Pelo

“Young Children and Social Justice”
Karen Cachevki Williams & Margaret Cooney

“How to Create an Environment that Counteracts Stereotypes”
Alice Honig
Observation

Actions & Interactions

Planning

Reflection

Analysis

Adapted from authentic Childhood: Exploring Reggio Emilia in the Classroom
Observation
Looking through the lens of a Peace Educator

✈ Social – Relationships
✈ Emotional and Physical - Needs Met
✈ Cognitive - Perspective Taking, Critical Thinking
Mirror Activity

• Choose a partner from another table

• Pick one person to start as the mirror and one to be the actor

• The mirror must follow the actor exactly in time with the actor's movement

• On the mark, switch the mirror and actor role

• Talk about what you observed.
When and How to Intervene

- Ensure Safety
- Power On, For and With
- Model Language and Behavior
- Empowering Children to Talk to Each Other
- Open Ended Questions – Fostering Critical Thinking
- Allow Children Time to Think
When and How to Intervene

 HDRX Opportunity to Scaffold a “Teachable Moment”
 HDRX Emergent curriculum
 HDRX Complicating and deepening play
 HDRX Involving more children in the process
Teacher’s Role
Create the foundation by building community

Agreements created by children, posted & referred to often
Involving families
Rituals & celebrations
Caring for others, animals & plants in classroom
Real Responsibilities: Help sweep up, weed care for the garden & class pets, carry heavy things! Shovel snow
Traditions around listening
Teacher’s Role

Common Ground

Helping children see what they have in common to build upon
Teacher’s Role

Empowerment Activities

• Teach communication skills - "stop" - "I feel. …When you…" "I want…“

• Classroom responsibilities: help sweep up, weed care for the garden & class pets, carry heavy things! Shovel snow

• Opportunities for decision making

• Opportunities to be heard

• Opportunities for leadership

• Working together to solve a problem/create a solution
Teacher’s Role

Creating Content

- Provide content that creates opportunities that reflect the children’s experiences
- Provide open-ended materials
- Offer creative problems for children to consider
Environment

Physical
- Furnishing
- Open Space
- Private Space
- Timing/schedule
- Reflection of Children, Families and Staff

Psychological
- Classroom Culture
- Agreements
- Limits
- Timing
- Tools
From Bullying to Empowerment:

Bullying Behavior is:
• Physical
• Verbal (teasing, taunting)
• Relational (exclusion)

Characteristics are:
• Intention of hurting another physically or emotionally
• The behavior is repeated, ongoing
• There is an imbalance of power

NOTE: The behavior in preschoolers is part of the developmental stage he/she is trying to find a way to get needs met. Talk about bullying before concrete thinking. Think in black and white and egocentric.
Focus on Prevention
Creating a Community Built on Trust

Issues of power and power imbalance:

• It is critical to keep in mind whenever creating strategies to build trust, that the issues around power will be central. Some individuals are feeling powerless, some are seeking power, and some are unclear about the use of power.

• The bullied, the bully and the witness are all part of the community.

• Witnesses, children and adults alike, can be empowered to become allies.
Judging is not helpful – when there is an imbalance of power, everyone in the situation suffers. We don’t use the word victim to describe any one party since it suggests helplessness.

Role modeling by the adults in their own interactions with children and other adults is critical.
The Witness

What is the distinction between a witness and an ally? How do adults become allies? How do children?

Skills: observing, accessing danger, knowing when to intervene, knowing how to share and balance power.

The witness’ role in building community
The Bullied

Empowerment
- Care must be taken to insure that the bullied is not retaliating
- Practice appropriate language and behavior

Trusted Adults
- Dependable consistent behavior
- Availability
- Empathy
- Facilitator of problem solving and communication

Sense of community
- Both the teacher and the other children can provide a supportive community for the child
The Bully

This child needs to trust and have a sense of responsibility

I need to know that there is someone who will not allow me to do harm. "I can't let you hurt anyone, and I will not allow anyone to hurt you."

When you see me lash out and hit someone for no apparent reason, ask what is it that I need? I may be lashing out because I need to feel safe.

When you see me boss others around and insist on getting my own way, what is it that I need?
To help me, you must take the time and have the patience to calm my unthinking, automatic response to perceived danger. All the things we do as preschool teachers to help build resiliency are critical in relaxing a child's conditioned responses to perceived danger. We do this by starting at the very beginning - we take the responsibility of developing TRUST.
The Bully cont.

**Primary caregiver** is someone who is "matched" to the child, to encourage attachment. Primary caregivers genuinely enjoy the child's company, care about the child's welfare, is committed to the child's success and build a trusting relationship.

**Predictable daily routine** - the child comes to "own" his school day.

**Predictable Adult** - no surprises - we say what we mean - if we say, "if you use the scooter to hurt others, you will not be able to use it today" - and then follow through. So that they can *depend* upon your word.
Involving Families – Creating Partnerships

- Community building to include families
- Developing child’s sense of self and place in the community
- Respecting & celebrating of diversity
- Developing trust and respect
Not “just” a parent conference

Classroom participation
- Jobs, family celebrations, cooking favorite dishes, sharing favorite book, sharing hobbies
- Spending time

Photo documentation, observations

Creating a welcoming environment
- Arrival and departure rituals and culture
- Physical environment for adults
Family Involvement

Creating opportunities for extended family participation

- Grandparent involvement
- Special guests
- Family posters, family of the month shelf
Collaboration: Administration

逖 Asking for Support
  • Emphasize Proactive Strategies not Punitive

逖 Staff Meetings
  • Setting a Program Philosophy
  • Operationalizing the Philosophy
Working with Colleagues

- Live What You Teach
- Consensus
Tools

- Class Meetings
- Talking Stick
- Peace Path
- Peace Table
- Peace Bag
Nurturing Healthy Growth: Balancing Freedom & Responsibility

Teacher Role

Child

Roots:

Basic Needs
Teacher’s Role

Address adult responsibility and accountability

• Modeling through adult to adult and adult to child interactions
• Reminding children of agreements with consistency
• Observing and reflecting back to children
• Engaging children in problem solving and planning