



WE CAN WORK IT OUT

How Family Day uses HighScope's "Six Steps" to de-escalate conflict among children

Try as you might, you just can't avoid conflict. It is a normal and natural part of life — and it is par for the course when children are around.

This is particularly true in child care programs, where many youngsters are grouped together on a daily basis and expected to wait their turn, share toys, and generally just get along with one another.

Knowing how to de-escalate conflict and properly respond to children is vital to the harmony of a child care setting. It is also important in helping children learn how to play well with others and gain life skills of their own.

There are various ways child care providers can help children resolve conflict. At Family Day, we use HighScope's Six Steps of Conflict Resolution when dealing with conflict among pre-school children (up to age six).

"In early childhood education, conflicts happen constantly, and we need the

strategies and skills to address these," says Issa Mendoza, Supervisor at Divine Infant and Lynwood Heights centres. "The Six Steps is a model we can all use to guide us in turning conflict into teachable moments."

The HighScope Approach

HighScope is a quality approach to early childhood care and education that identifies and builds on children's strengths, interests and abilities. HighScope identifies six steps to conflict resolution that Family Day child care providers practice:

- 1 Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions**
 - Place yourself between the children, on their level
 - Use a calm voice and gentle touch
 - Remain neutral rather than take sides
- 2 Acknowledge children's feelings**
 - "You look really upset."
 - Let children know you need to hold any object in question

- 3 Gather information**
 - "What's the problem?"
- 4 Restate the problem**
 - "So the problem is..."
- 5 Ask for ideas for solutions and choose together**
 - "What can we do to solve this problem?"
 - Encourage children to think of a solution
- 6 Be prepared to give follow-up support**
 - "You solved the problem!"
 - Stay near the children

"Family Day recognizes that conflict is normal, that preschool children may have limited language, and their life experiences are developing," says MaryLou Maher, Manager of Home Child Care at Family Day. "As educators in this field, we use these six steps in a calm and respectful manner, always ensuring children are heard."

Equipping Educators

From arguments over toys to competing for adult attention, our child care providers see it all on a daily basis. “Some people don’t like dealing with conflicts,” says Mendoza. “But the HighScope model helps to refer and guide staff so they can use conflicts to teach children.”

Child care providers strive to help children resolve issues, and always want to involve them in the process. The steps deal with what is called “active learning,” which means allowing children to experience the learning first-hand rather than be a spectator.

“We use these steps with a supportive and collaborative approach,” notes Maher. “We always want to acknowledge how children are feeling and ensure they are always part of any solution.

Mendoza notes that “telling children what to do without them going through the process makes it harder for them to grasp the idea. Whenever there is a conflict, there is an opportunity to use the model constructively.”

Benefits to Children

Young children are still developing the social skills that enable them to play cooperatively with other children and to function as part of a group. Often when children “misbehave,” it is because they haven’t yet learned the skills to negotiate, to ask for what they need, or to properly join in play with others.¹

Learning to handle conflicts in productive ways is an important social skill that children will use throughout their lives. When child care providers help pre-schoolers practice resolving conflicts, the children become more sensitive to the needs and feelings of others. They also develop self-confidence when they learn how to solve problems in a positive way.²

Conflict resolution, like the type used in the Six Steps, also teaches children how to think creatively and evaluate various solutions. With the support of a child care provider, children are almost always able to reach a resolution.

Consistency is Important

“We always emphasize the importance of using the steps in a consistent manner, because it works,” notes Mendoza. “We see children learn as they go, and figure out how to solve things on their own.”

By consistently practicing the Six Steps, children start to internalize the steps and even learn to work through them. Mendoza notes that some of the older children, who have seen the process in action for years, will often try to serve as mediators when conflict arises.

“They know what to do — I see it all of the time,” says Mendoza. “If you stick with the model, if you commit to it, it has positive effects for the children and the educators.”

When de-escalation happens safely and calmly, it leads to a positive and productive child care environment. The Six Steps work to ensure the children’s voices are heard — and give them a good dose of independence.

1. *Working it Out Together* (Krista M. Macsata) 2. *Benefits of Teaching Conflict Resolution to Young Children* (extension.org)

TIPS FOR TRANSITIONING INTO CHILD CARE

The time has finally come. You are putting your little one into child care and your anxiety is at an all-time high. While it can be a trying time, there are ways that you can make the transition a smooth one:

Communicate. Speak openly and honestly with centre staff, and ask how they help to transition new children into their program. Offer as much information about your child as possible so they can create a transitional period that best suits your child.

Pay a visit or two. Before the first full day, visit the centre a few times with your child and stay for an hour or so. Your child will see familiar faces and get to know the location, so it’s not so sudden and overwhelming.

Make a list. You might worry about seeming overprotective, but writing down information about your child and giving it to the staff will help them understand your child’s personality and preferences. That can mean less trial and error.

Keep it routine. Making your child aware of his or her schedule during the day is important. Talk to your child about the schedule, what to expect, and when you will be back. Some families even create a ritual for good-byes (i.e., a certain amount of hugs each morning).

Bring items from home. Bringing something special from home, such as a blanket or stuffed toy, can help children in a new child care situation. It brings a sense of the familiar and can often

calm children down when they feel upset. Photographs of family are also a good item to bring to a new child care situation.



Info from: *Tips for Transitioning into Daycare* by Tammy Gold; *Ways to Prepare Your Child for Child Care* by Deborah Rycus



MESSAGE FROM DIANE DALEY, CEO

AN INTRODUCTION AND A WELCOME

I am delighted to introduce myself as the incoming CEO of Family Day. I stepped into my new role on July 1, 2019, succeeding Joan Arruda who retired in June. I have been a senior leader at Family Day for the past 11 years, and I am truly excited about this new opportunity.

I would like to welcome new and returning families to our programs. You have made a great choice in Family Day, an agency that has been serving children and families for 168 years. Our agency has evolved and changed over time, and today we

provide a range of high-quality early learning programs across the GTA, including home child care, centre-based child care, EarlyON Child and Family Centres, and a Homework Plus program funded by the United Way.

It is our pleasure to serve you and meet your specific need for child care, early learning and family support programming. As leaders in the sector we are invested in ensuring children and their families have a positive experience, and have created many tools to support you as you engage in your child's learning.

We want to ensure we have open lines of communication so you can share your perspectives and get involved in ways that work best for you. I hope you will take the time to read our Parent Handbook and Program Statement, both of which are available at www.familydaycare.com. We also encourage you to follow us on Twitter and Facebook, where we share daily highlights of the wonderful learning that takes place in our programs.

I am truly excited about my new role at Family Day, and I look forward to the journey we will share together.

JOIN US FOR OPEN DOORS

**Come enjoy the outdoors with us!
Family Day is holding an outdoor event
next month — and you are all invited!**

The event, our second annual OPEN Doors day, will be held at the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Woodbridge on Saturday, October 5 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Registration will take place online via Eventbrite.

All Family Day staff, caregivers, families, and participants from all of our programs are invited to come and enjoy a day of hands-on, nature activities in the forest. A variety of activity stations, geared to all ages, will be facilitated during the day by Toronto Region Conservation Authority staff.



OPEN DOORS
FAMILY DAY OUTDOOR
LEARNING ADVENTURES



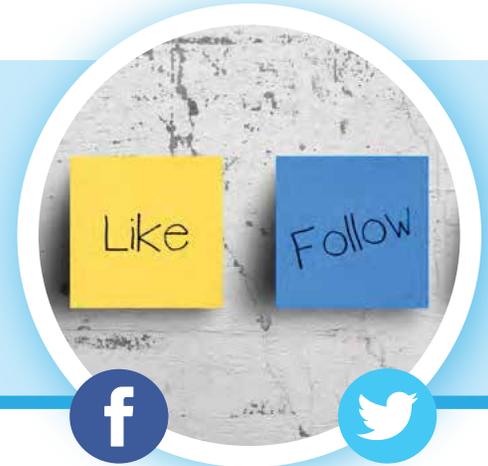
United Way
Toronto & York Region

OUR UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN

Family Day will once again participate in the annual United Way Campaign in 2020. The campaign raises money for the charity in a variety of ways, including dance-a-thons at every centre and an annual CN Tower Climb. Thanks to your generous donations, Family Day's 2019 campaign was a success, and we hope 2020 will be just as positive.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you new to Family Day? Are you looking to stay informed? We invite you to join us on social media for agency updates, sector news, photos and videos, and a variety of useful information. Join our Facebook community at facebook.com/FamilyDayCareServices and find us on Twitter at twitter.com/FamilyDayGTA.



FOCUS GROUPS LOOK AT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

From April to August 2019, we embarked on a project to find better ways to engage families at Family Day.

Nousheen Khan, a fourth-year placement student from George Brown College, headed up this program under the guidance of Diane Daley.

As part of the project, Khan conducted research via focus groups. These groups were comprised of various stakeholders, including families, supervisors, educators, and caregivers.

The focus groups provided the agency with insightful

perspectives about family engagement in children's early learning. A full research report, citing the results, will be shared agency-wide in the near future.



FAMILY DAY



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Our Programs

- Licensed Home Child Care
- Child Care Centres
- School Age Programs
- Resource Programs
- EarlyON Child and Family Centres
- Homework Plus

FOCUS Newsletter

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For countless families, Family Day is the only way!