



How to Use a Time Machine in the Playroom

Conflict is an opportunity to teach missing executive or social-emotional skills. The [Conflict Resolution Time Machine](#) helps families transform hurtful acts into life lessons by using respectful, assertive communication.

When a conflict occurs, the first step is always to help both parties regain calm. The brain cannot learn while in a state of upset. Once both parties are calm, but while the event is still fresh, coach children in using the Time Machine as follows:

Step 1: Roll back time. Have the participants roll their hands backwards signifying going back in time.

Step 2: Are you willing? Ask for willingness by saying, “Are you willing to have a do-over and solve the problem?” If willing, the victim stands on the “I don’t like it” side of the mat and the aggressor on the other side.

Step 3: Breathing star. Be a S.T.A.R. Everyone Smiles, Takes a deep breath And Relaxes.

Step 4: Tree of hearts. Wish each other well. Everyone places their hands on their hearts and offers well wishes to each other.

Step 5: 1-2-3. Focus on the goal. The adult chants, “1-2-3,” and the participants respond, “Let’s do it,” to build unity.



Step 6: Sentence starters. Coach the children to use helpful words. Have the victim speak first using the sentence starter printed on the Time Machine. “I don’t like it when you _____. Next time, please_____.” Help children reframe their thoughts to show how they want to be treated. Instead of, “Stop it,” teach phrases like, “Next time say, ‘Move please,’ instead of pushing me.”

Step 7: Hearts and globe. Connect to repair the bond and show there are no hard feelings. Participants connect with a handshake, a hug, a high-five, or another symbolic gesture.

Shubert’s Big Voice is essential in teaching children assertiveness. Read it often and provide opportunities for children to role-play problem-solving using the Time Machine.