

Strategies for Working with Difficult People

When working with difficult children, there are many strategies to use. During a leadership training, five strategies were identified. A person can question “What does this mean?” when he or she sees a child acting difficult. When one understands why a certain occurrence is happening, a plan of action might be easier to create. Another possible strategy is questioning if it is the time or place to engage in conflict with the child. It is very tough for children to listen when they are feeling overwhelmed and emotional. It might be better for the child to calm down before addressing him or her with conflict.

Questioning if the conflict is personal is also a strategy to use when working with difficult children. The child could work better with another adult or teacher where a stronger relationship has already been established. It is important to consider the goal and the relationship when working with difficult children. If the goal of the child’s safety is more important than a happy relationship, then one would need to force the goal. On the other hand, if the relationship is more important than taking out a new toy, then one would smooth the situation. When the relationship and the goal are important, negotiation or compromise are the best strategies to use. The final strategy identified in the training was assertive communication. Using the sentence structure “I feel (emotion), when you (action)” can help children understand feelings and how their actions affect others.

One strategy that I learned from a course called Learning in the Young Child certainly helped me work with difficult children. When a child is performing an unwanted behavior, suggest an alternative, appropriate behavior. Once a child chooses an appropriate behavior, and performs it, I would positively reinforce them. An example was when a child would not stop yelling in the classroom. I suggested using an inside voice or going outside. When the child chose to yell outside, I gave him thumbs up and thanked him for making a decision.

When working with difficult families, the same strategies can be applied. Two strategies I have used with difficult parents are being empathic and composed. It is easy to match a difficult person's energy and anger, but it will not lead to a solution. Staying calm and collected helps me remember that I know what I am doing. I can keep my mind focused on how to appropriately solve the problem. Keeping composure also helps me understand where the difficult parent is coming from. In my experience, showing a person that I am listening and understanding helps the person work cooperatively with me.

The YouTube video link provided explains three strategies for working with difficult people. Before hearing strategies, the audience is reminded that no one is perfect, and I think that is a great way to start the video. Everyone can be difficult at one time or another and taking a step back to remind ourselves of this can help when working together. The first strategy is the process, which is a way of communication. Making sure everyone is communicating in a respectful and clear way ensures that students, teachers and families are on the same page. Modeling the rules is a crucial strategy in the classroom. Children see how adults are treating themselves, each other and the environment. Lastly, having fun is a valuable strategy for children. If relationships have steady communication, clear rules and excitement, then difficult times can be worked through.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d8Q4iA36oQo>