Leadership Training Written Assignment 1: Working with Difficult People

One strategy for working with difficult children is distinguishing between the goal and the relationship. Between the goals and relationships there are levels of value depending on the conflict, which is either high or low. There are five different relationships and goals that include smooth, negotiate, withdraw, force, and compromise. Compromise is making sacrifices in the situation, which is the overall goal and relationship. Depending on the situation, a person must decide if the relationship is as important as the goal, or if the goal is more important than the relationship. When it comes to a child’s safety, the relationship is not as important as the goal. The goal becomes high and the relationship becomes low which would result in force. It is important to evaluate the conflicts and decide which route you should take.

Another strategy for working with difficult children is figuring out what the conflict means instead of trying to figure out what you should do. In many situations, the conflict has nothing to do with you, it has more to do with the person and their personal life. With figuring out what the conflict means, you also have to consider if this is the right time and place to converse with this individual. If you are talking to a child in the middle of class, that might not be the appropriate time, because other students may be watching and listening, and then that would embarrass the child. Instead, wait until recess or lunchtime to talk with that student.

Engaging the conflict the right way is another important strategy when interacting with a person. There are different ways to engage in a conflict, but the right way is by being assertive. Even if both individuals do not agree, it is important to treat each other with dignity and respect. In assertive communication both parties matter, and both sides are heard. When working with a child, it important to allow the child to talk about how he or she is feeling and be understanding, but also make sure the child understands how you are feeling.

The type of language one uses is extremely important when engaging in conversation. Blocking language and yielding language were two types of languages that were identified. Blocking language stops the conversation with the other person and does not allow for further conversation to be said. Yielding is the ideal language because you understand where the person comes from, but you explain how you are feeling or what you think. This allows for the conversation to continue, and for both parties to discuss their thoughts.

Identifying and broadening one’s knowledge and vocabulary when it comes to feelings is extremely important. Allowing children to express their feelings is essential, and to help them do this, you must express yours. To do this, one must say, “I feel \_\_\_\_, when you \_\_\_\_. Allowing for feelings to be a part of the conversation is a great addition because it shows honesty and allows the child or the individual to not hide their feelings. It is important to be able to express oneself in a conversation and the best way to do this is being able to explain one’s feelings.

One idea for a new strategy would be a feelings board. Some children do not know how to express themselves using the appropriate words, so showing them a board with pictures and words of feelings might be helpful. This can turn into a lesson plan with the entire class, which occurred at the preschool that I work at. The children all said words that they knew or understood correlated with feelings. This was a great lesson, because then a book was read based on feeling different ways when certain things happened to them. It is beneficial to take the time to go over words that children can use starting at an early age that will help them in their future years.

Another strategy would be to send notes home or call the parents regarding the child’s behavior on a daily basis whether their behavior was appropriate or not. It is important to work with the children and families to ensure everyone is on the same page when trying to implement positive behaviors on a daily basis. At my work some of the children who have difficult behaviors seem to have these behaviors at home as well. It is important that parents and teachers work together to be able to implement the same things at home and at school. Many of the parents that I engage with are supportive of the idea of working together to help their child.

When engaging with parents, one strategy is that I have seen work is listening to them whether they have concerns or questions and explaining to them that I understand how they are feeling and that I would like to help them the best of my ability. Once I listen to their thoughts, I explain to them that I will either get my director or another staff member who may have information, if I do not know what to say. It is important to show the parent that you care and are willing to listen and help them out. You may not agree with what they are saying, but you still need to show them respect and listen to their every word.

I researched the topic “working with difficult children”, and a lot of resources were found. There is a website called worksheetlibrary.com and it has an article titled “Teacher’s guide to working with difficult students”. There were four different ideas discussed, but the one that stood out to me was “A New Assistant to You”. After reading this paragraph, I started thinking of all of the different ways this could help both the teacher and student. It discusses how the difficult student in the classroom should become the teachers assistant whether it is making copies, running errands, or getting supplies. This would only work if the student was old enough and you could trust them. For the younger students, an idea is to have them get you different items from the cupboards or drawers as well as pick books out to read. Depending on the age level, this idea can be managed to fit appropriately to meet the needs of the child and teacher. It is a great idea especially because that child may use that time to calm himself down, or walk and think about what is going on, but most of all it makes them feel important and helpful.

<http://www.worksheetlibrary.com/teachingtips/teachingdifficultstudents.html>