

# Everybody Gets Mad: Helping Your Child Cope with Conflict

## Help Children Act Calm

- Let them know that it takes more courage to walk away from a fight than to stay and fight.
- Teach them that fights don't solve problems—they make new ones.
- Remind them that when they get mad but don't fight, they have really won.



Sometimes, getting along with other kids is hard. Some kids:

- Get into fights when they are angry.
- Get teased a lot.
- Encourage others to fight.

This can make your child feel bad or get in trouble. Teach your child how to deal with anger and stay out of trouble.

## Everyone Gets Mad

Anger doesn't usually last a long time, but it is a very strong feeling when it happens.

Children get mad when:

- Their feelings are hurt or they can't do what they want.
- Others don't understand them or lie about them.
- They feel left out or others don't act the way they want.

When children are mad, their bodies react:

- Their hearts beat faster and their faces feel hot and sweaty.
- It might be hard to breathe and they can't think clearly.
- They have a lot of energy and want action.

When children are angry, it is:

- Good to put their feelings into words.
- Not good to hit someone, break things, or say things that hurt.

## Teach Your Child to ACT CALM

When children get mad, they can ACT:

### Acknowledge

- Acknowledge angry feelings.
- Notice changes in their bodies.

## Calm down

[Back to Top](#)

- Breathe deeply, count to 10, or walk away.
- Punch a pillow, run, or play music.

## Think and talk

- Think about the problem and ways to fix it. If someone doesn't know what children are trying to say or do, they need to explain themselves.
- Talk with someone about being mad and ways to fix the problem without fighting. If there is nobody to talk to right away, stop and think, "This is why I'm mad and what I need to do is ..."

If someone tries to start a fight, your child can be the one to stay CALM:

## Calm down

- Keep a safe distance from the other person.
- Take slow, deep breaths.
- Stay alert and stand tall.

## Avoid

- Avoid name-calling or returning insults. It only makes things worse.
- Avoid other kids who may want to fight. Try to talk in private with the kid who wants to fight.

## Listen

- Calmly listen to what the other kid says.
- Ask, "What does this person really want?"

## Move on

Find ways to solve the problem without fighting.

- Use humor. "I wouldn't want you to catch my cold."
- Give a reason. "We'll both get thrown off the team if we fight."
- Walk away. If nothing else works, it's best to walk away.

Children do what they see others do. You are your child's most important role model.

If your child is still having trouble getting along with other kids, talk with your pediatrician.

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