Transcript for the Video:

**Guiding Young Children's Behavior**

**Segment 5: Responding to Behavior Problems and Resolving Conflicts**

**Objective 4: Conflict Resolution**

**Carlota Schechter, Expert:** When you first see children involved in a conflict I think it’s important to step back and think about what your primary goal is - and your goal is to make this a learning opportunity for the children. So the goal is not to end the conflict immediately. The goal is not to stop conflicts from happening, but the goal is when children are in a conflict situation to try and help them learn the skills they need to be able to resolve a conflict independently.

**Carlota Schechter:** It’s winter now in our school and so a big learning goal for us is helping children to get their snow pants and their boots on when they’re getting ready to go outside. It would be a lot quicker for us if we, as the adults, put the children’s boots on for them but then we wouldn’t be teaching them anything. It wouldn’t be a learning opportunity.

**Carlota Schechter:** The same thing is true with conflicts. If two children are struggling over a marker it would be a lot easier for us to hand them another marker so they’d have two markers, or to separate the children, or to intervene in some other way. But that would not be a learning opportunity.

**Carlota Schechter:** As children begin to learn to use this conflict resolution procedure they will begin to find non aggressive ways to resolve conflicts and aggression will begin to decrease in a classroom. So it’s really important that you institute that procedure.

**Carlota Schechter:** The children who learn those conflict resolution strategies are less likely to be aggressive as they get to be older children. They’re less likely to be the children who bully other children and they’re also more likely to stand up for their own rights and not be bullied as they get older.

**Host:** We would like to show you a series of steps that have been found to be successful in dealing with children’s conflict. Let’s look at the steps one at a time.
Host: In the first step you keep all the involved children together. It can be tempting to separate fighting children, but keeping them together allows children to work through their problem and learn important problem solving skills with you as their guide.

Host: The only time you would separate the children is if they are extremely angry or if there could be violence. Then you can still bring them back together when they have calmed down.

Host: Next, give each child a chance to explain what happened. A good way to do this is to ask one child at a time, “what happened?” and give them a chance to answer. If children are able to share what occurred then that’s great. If they can’t, you can share your own perceptions of what happened. You might say, “Well it looks like Michael hit Jeffrey and you’re both very angry.”

Host: After both children tell their story or you have shared your perceptions, you restate and clarify the problem. The goal here is to make sure the children understand clearly the problem to be solved.

Host: Then you give each child a chance to suggest a solution. If the children have trouble with this step, you can help them by offering several solutions. The children can decide which one they want to try. This still gives the children a voice in the solution. You might say, “You could take turns or you could do it together. Which would you like to do?”

Host: Next the children agree on a solution and try it out while you watch to see how it goes. Later you can check with the children and see how things are going.

Host: Now we are going to see the process in action. Let’s look at how one teacher uses several of the steps in the conflict resolution process.

Teacher: The mom and the cork, wait. Good job, Thank you.
Child 1: I want to put on the lid. No I, no I can do it.
Child 2: I took it out.
Child 1: No I can do this. I can do this. Child 2: Noooo, no, no I took it out. Child 1: I want to do it. (Crying)
Teacher: Excuse me. You have to both negotiate.

Narrator: Notice how the teacher keeps these arguing children together.

Teacher: Now who’s going to put it away?
Child 1: Me.
Teacher: You want to put it away? Jared, do you want to put it away too?
Child 2: Yeah. I’ll put it away.
Teacher: You want to put it away? Okay. Hold on. Okay come sit down please. okay, No, just sit down. And you want to put it away? And you want to put it away too?
Child: Yeah.

Narrator: The caregiver has clarified what is happening and has restated the problem. Both children want to put the toy away.

Teacher: Okay, but what should we do? It can be put away by just one person.
Child 2: How bout me? I’m a...I’m a...
Child 1: Me.
Teacher: You’ll have to talk to Jared.
Child 1: Jared, I want to, want to carry this. No.
Teacher: Yes, you want to carry this too, right Jared?
Child 2: Yeah, How bout the both of them?
Teacher: I don’t know. That’s a good solution. But ask Olivia if that’s okay?

Narrator: Finally, the caregiver gives each child a chance to suggest a solution. Then the teacher listens patiently as the children themselves come up with ways to resolve their problem.

Child 2: That’s okay? Why?
Child 1: I want to do it by myself.
Child 2: I’m a good person. I’m not a bad person. I’m a good.
Child 1: I want to do it.
Child 2: Can I do this, Ginny?
Teacher: You’ll have to ask Olivia. You want to put it away right? You’ll have to negotiate with Olivia.
Child 2: Please Olivia. I’m a good boy. I would advise you, because you don’t like me, that I put it away.
Teacher: Excuse me, hold on. This has to stay here until you both come up with a solution that you think is okay.
Child 2: That’s okay? Why?
Child 1: I want to do it. I want to hold it. I want to hold it.
Teacher: No. It stays right here until you come up with a solution with Olivia.
Child 1: How bout...both of them, (unclear words)
Child 1: No I want to hold it.
Child 2: Okay, okay.

Host: Sometimes children come up with fair and satisfying solutions to conflicts on their own. Sometimes, as in this case, they have trouble coming up with just the right solution. One thing you can do is suggest several ways to resolve things. Children can choose which solution they’d like to try.

Host: You might say, “We could carry the toy to the shelf together, or one of you could carry it to the shelf now and the other one could carry it to the shelf later. Which of those things do you want to try?” Even though these are teacher suggestions, it still gives the children a choice in how to solve the problem.

Host: Now we want you to think about how this conflict resolution process differs from what you currently do. Which steps do you already use? Which new ones will you try?