HEALTHY CONFLICT

Families are made up of individuals, and each person in a family will have different goals and desires. But families are also a system. What one member of the family does affects all the other family members. When family members disagree, conflicts can arise. Conflict is a normal part of every family, but strong families develop effective ways to resolve it.

Families use different methods to resolve conflict. The children's ages, the parents' ideas about who should make decisions in families, and the way the family lives all affect the way
they resolve conflict. Two-year-olds are able to make fewer decisions than teenagers because their knowledge and thinking abilities are more limited. Some parents believe they should make most of the decisions; other parents believe in sharing decision making with their children. Parents who live in dangerous neighborhoods may have more rules and make more decisions for their children in order to keep them safe.

Although families differ in the way they handle conflict, strong families have certain things in common. Parents in these families have made clear rules about important things: rules that are needed to keep the children safe or to respect deeply held family values. Parents in these families explain to children why rules are important, and parents in these families consistently enforce the rules. But they also change rules when children have outgrown them.

Strong families also realize that some family conflict is normal. They see conflict as an opportunity to grow as a family and to negotiate differences. They listen carefully to each other, express their ideas appropriately, and work together to find the best solution for a problem.

**Working Together with Family Rules**
Families have rules because rules help them meet their goals. Rules also make working together easier. This activity will help family members understand why certain rules are necessary. Suitable for all ages.

**Resolving Conflict**
Conflict is a normal part of family life. In this activity, family members will learn skills for resolving conflict. Suitable for age 6 and older.

**The Solutions Search**
This activity provides more practice in resolving conflict, this time with real situations. Suitable for age 8 and older.

**Blueprint for Decision Making**
In this activity, family members use sample problems to practice making decisions. Suitable for age 6 and older.

**I Want It All!**
Families usually have unlimited needs and wants, but they probably have limited resources. As a result, they have to make choices. This activity helps family members practice making choices. Suitable for age 6 and older.

**Activity Overload**
Everyone has 24 hours in his day. This activity teaches how to make a list and prioritize items on that list to make sure the most important things get done. Suitable for age 8 and older.