

Conflict Resolution

EPSY 490

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Conflict

The school bus incident with fifth grade students takes place between two students, Denise and Sally, on the way to school in the morning. On the way to school, on the morning of Thursday, March 21, 2009, a fight broke out on the bus between Denise and Sally over the care and treatment of a library book. However, during mediation, we come to learn that there is more at stake than a library book.

Disputants Involved

Denise is a fifth grade student at Cache La Poudre Elementary School. She can be a bit aggressive and assertive towards others, particularly fellow female classmates. Denise is a good student who is very concerned about her grades and turning in assignments on time. She wants nothing more than to be successful and will let no one and nothing stand in her way.

Sally is also a fifth grade student at Cache La Poudre Elementary School. Her father was recently laid off at the aluminum plant. As a result, her family has begun to struggle with money issues and are watching where money is spent very closely. Sally is feeling the brunt of this burden. As a result she has become very distraught and embarrassed about her home life.

What Happened According to Denise

When given a chance to describe what took place, Denise explained that she needed to get a book, about volcanos back from Sally for a project that she was

working on. While taking the book from Sally, Denise accidentally hit Sally on the head with the book. Denise's main desire was to get the book to complete her project. When given the chance to ask questions, Sally did not understand how being hit in the head could have possibly been an accident. Denise explained that it happened out of frustration.

What Happened According to Sally

When given a chance to describe what took place, Sally explained that while riding the bus in the morning, Denise grabbed the book without reason, hit her in the head with the book and then there were suddenly pages from the book spread over the floor. Sally's main concern is who will pay for the damage that was done to the book, claiming that Denise will have to cover the charges. Overall, Sally is upset about her situation at home and did not need the added aggravation.

When given the chance to ask questions, Denise was not sure why she would have to pay the late fees for the book, given that Sally was the one who had checked it out.

Sally described that the damage was Denise's fault and that she could have used another library book instead of taking the book that she had already checked out.

Solutions

Denise offered to pay for half of the book given that she did play a role in the damage of the book. Sally cannot afford to pay for half because of her situation at home, however she would be willing to pay back the school by some means for half of the book. No other solutions were offered to resolve how one person has treated

the other or looks that have been exchanged in the past.

Resolution Package

Both Denise and Sally have offered to pay for half of the book. Sally will work with the school to pay off her half of the total.

Critique of the Mediation

I felt that the mediation went relative well for my first mediation. All of the participants were very respectful of the process and each other. It was nice to hear each of the students taking their own turn and remembering the rules about name calling and put downs. It has been my experience that one student can take advantage of knowing personal information, however both participant remained respectful of each other.

I do think that there were some down sides to the mediation as well. When given the opportunity to lead a discussion about resolution, I focused on the cost of the book and set aside Sally's complaints about how she was treated by Denise. There were two main topics of importance: cost of replacing the book and how Sally was treated from disturbing glances to being hit in the head with the book. Given the opportunity to do this mediation again I would focus on the personal aspects of the dispute as well. If the personal issues are not resolved conflicts pose more of an opportunity to repeat themselves.