

Montessori Conflict Scripts Cheat Sheet

Conflict in toddlerhood is normal—and in Montessori, it's part of the learning process. This cheat sheet offers respectful, developmentally appropriate phrases you can use to guide toddlers and preschoolers through real-life social struggles. These scripts help model empathy, assertiveness, and problem-solving without shame or punishment. Great for home, school, and playdates.

When Both Children Want the Same Toy

- “You both want the same toy. Let’s see what we can do.”
Gives space for problem-solving instead of assigning blame.
- “He’s still using it. You can have a turn when he’s done.”
Teaches patience and respect for others' work.
- “Let’s wait together until it’s available.”
Makes waiting feel like a supported choice, not a punishment.

When a Toy Is Grabbed or Taken

- “He was using that. Let’s give it back and wait.”
Restores fairness without shame.
- “You grabbed the toy. Let’s ask for a turn next time.”
Names the behavior clearly and models an alternative.
- “I won’t let you take things from someone’s hands. We can try a different way.”
Sets a respectful boundary.

When a Child Is Upset

- “You didn’t like that. Let’s tell them how you feel.”
Supports emotional expression without blame.
- “You’re feeling upset. Let’s take a breath together.”
Helps regulate emotions with co-regulation.
- “It’s okay to feel mad. We’ll figure it out together.”
Validates big feelings and reminds the child they are not alone.

When There's Hitting, Biting, or Pushing

- "I won't let you hurt anyone. Let's keep our bodies safe."

A firm, calm limit with safety at the core.

- "You're showing me with your body that something's wrong. Let's find another way."

Acknowledges the message without condoning the action.

- "Let's take a break together and come back when you're ready."

Supports regulation without isolation or shame.

When You're Observing Conflict (and Waiting to Intervene)

- "I see two children working through a problem."

Affirms their effort without judgment.

- "Let's wait and see how they handle this."

Reinforces trust in the child's capacity to solve challenges.

- "I'm here if you need help."

A quiet signal of support without taking over.