Dealing with Conflict in Instant Challenge

It's inevitable. Where there are individuals, there is conflict. And where there are *multiple* kids, conflict can often be constant. Collaboration doesn't come naturally to us. Teamwork is a skill that is developed and it's up to us to teach them how to work together.

Your team will encounter conflict as it solves an instant challenge. Conflict is often a necessary step toward progress. Therefore, it is important for your team to learn how to deal with conflict as it arises.

How to Deal with CONFLICT in IC

- When you have a conflict on your team, begin by asking questions. Model appropriate behavior and conversations for your team. Have the students brainstorm ways to handle conflict and work through it.

- As a Team Manager, remember to play the role of facilitator. You should help the team process conflict as it happens, but you should avoid making decisions and judgments for the team.

- Another way to squelch conflict on a team is to have well-defined roles during Instant Challenge. This allows everyone to feel like a part of one bigger machine, working together to accomplish the task. Once your team members realize their strengths and use them regularly, you will have fewer conflicts and chemistry will begin to naturally occur.

Some common difficulties TMs might encounter with some effective ideas on how to address them from NYDI

A Team Member is Dismissive or Speaks Negatively About Other Members' Ideas

- As the team manager, you should interrupt this promptly!
- Ask the team member to explain exactly what their concerns are about the proposed idea.

- Ask the team member to propose an alternative that they think would work better, and explain why they think it would work better
- Don't allow team members to rank solutions; instead use a CPS Tool for idea selection.
- If the problem persists, brainstorm with the Team

A Team Member doesn't seem to be "pulling their weight", or seems disengaged

- First, check in with the team member. It doesn't hurt to ask them what is going on! But be careful to listen more than you tell, and be careful not to phrase your question in a way that makes them feel like you are accusing them of something.
- Have a chat with the team member's parent, and let them know your concerns.
- Discuss with the team how to allocate work more evenly.
- Is there a particular part of the Instant Challenge that this Team Member could concentrate on?

A Team Member is upset that their ideas are not selected by the team

- First, acknowledge the team member's contribution. Thank them for the effort they put in and the risk they took presenting their idea.
- Explore with the team whether aspects of the idea can be incorporated into the solution in some way.
- Speak to the team member's parent promptly, preferably before the team member goes home, to explain to them what happened.

A Team Member is domineering and attempts (either successfully or unsuccessfully) to force the team to adopt their ideas over other ideas

- Remind the entire team that everyone's ideas are worthy of consideration.
- One way for the dominating Team Member to become a Team player is to limit brainstorming to the first 3 ideas and then have the rest of the team build upon one of those ideas into an AMAZING **TEAM** idea.
- After the IC is over suggest the Team might "apply a CPS tool to choose which idea to use and compare against other ideas that the team has".
- Have a private discussion with the team member, and remind them that while their ideas are valued, the team members are all equals, and that the entire team must come into alignment behind a solution.
- If necessary, speak to the team member's parent and ask for assistance.

A Team Member that is bossy!

- Sometimes it is the Team Manager's kid sometimes it is the loudest kid.
- The best way to address this is to play games where everyone has to build upon other ideas. Have the bossy person go last. Encourage the bossy one to try and round up everyone else ideas and tie them all together creatively.
- Remind the entire team that everyone's ideas are worthy of consideration.
- Have a private discussion with the team member, and remind them that while their ideas are valued, the team members are all equals, and that the entire team must come into alignment behind a solution.
- If necessary, speak to the team member's parent and ask for assistance.