



# Conflict Resolution

Dr. Theresa Vadala

Equip children of all ages with effective strategies for resolving conflict.



Theresa Vadala  
Photo: Willow Wood

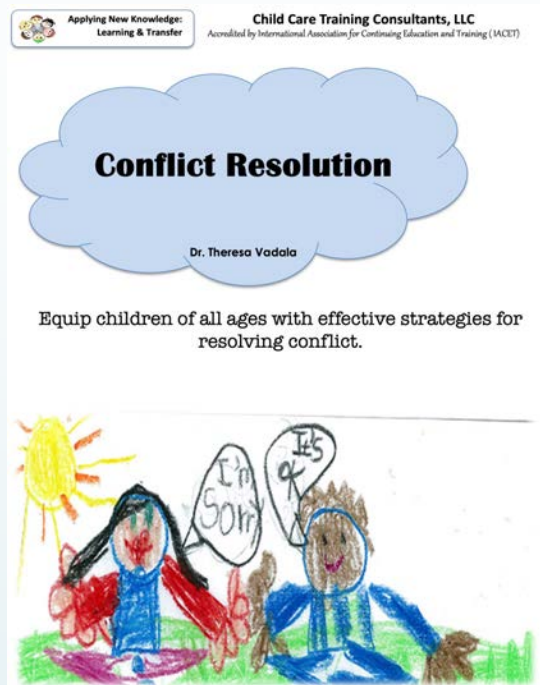


## Conflict Resolution

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRESCHOOL Module 3</b></p> <p><b>CDA Subject Area 3: Supporting children's social and emotional development</b></p> <p><b>Title: CDA SOC.EM 3.F Conflict Resolution</b></p>	<b>3 Hours</b>	<b>0.3 CEUs</b>
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**Dr. Theresa Vadala**  
**(Instructor & Curriculum Designer)**





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### **Learning Assessment**

Read the material provided, take the 5-10 quiz questions and complete the training evaluation at the end of the course.

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### **Child Care Training Consultants LLC., Goal**

The goal is to empower educators as they take Child Development Associate (CDA) courses to make a powerful difference in the lives of young children!

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“Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s is committed to provide research-based professional growth and development training courses primarily focused on the Child Development Associate. The CDA is the nation’s premier credential that is transferable, valid, competency-based and nationally recognized in all 50 states, territories, the District of Columbia, community colleges and the United State Military.

### **Vision**

Child Care Training Consultants, LLC’s vision is to provide the early childhood community with courses based on CDA competency standards to obtain their CDA Credential and assist in reaching their goal as an exceptional early childhood educator to ultimately achieve higher child outcomes.



## Research

Children's anger presents challenges to parents and teachers committed to constructive, ethical, and effective child guidance. This article explores what we know about the components of children's anger, factors contributing to understanding and managing anger, and the ways teachers can guide children's expressions of anger.

The culture of violence is mirrored in and influenced by the media. As a result of the deregulation of the broadcasting industry, children's television and related toys have become more violent (Carlsson-Paige & Levin, 1990). Research is clear that the media, particularly television and films, contribute to the problem of violence in America (Slabey, 1992; Huesmann & Miller, 1994). Research demonstrates that children who are frequent viewers of violence on television are less likely to show empathy toward the pain and suffering of others and more likely to behave aggressively in their environment, home or school.

Studies have identified several types of stress-producing causes of anger that young children face daily in classroom interactions:

- Conflict over possessions, which involves someone taking children's property or invading their space.
- Physical assault, which involves one child doing something to another child, such as pushing or hitting.
- Verbal conflict, for example, a tease or a taunt.
- Rejection, which involves a child being ignored or not allowed to play with peers.
- Issues of compliance, which often involve asking or insisting that children do something that they do not want to do—for instance, wash their hands.

Some children vent or express anger through facial expressions, crying, sulking, or talking, but do little to try to solve a problem or confront the provocateur. Others actively resist by physically or verbally defending their positions, self-esteem, or possessions in nonaggressive ways. Still other children express anger with aggressive revenge by physically or verbally retaliating against another child. Some children express dislike by telling the offender that he or she cannot play or is not liked. Other children express anger through avoidance or attempts to escape from or avoid the other child. And some children use adult seeking, looking for comfort or solutions from a teacher, or telling the teacher about an incident.











## Research

Teachers can use child guidance strategies to help children express angry feelings in socially constructive ways. Children develop ideas about how to express emotions (Michalson & Lewis, 1985; Russel, 1989) primarily through social interaction in their families and later by watching television or movies, playing video games, and reading books (Honig & Wittmer, 1992). Some children have learned a negative, aggressive approach to expressing anger (Cummings, 1987; Hennessy et al., 1994) and, when confronted with everyday anger conflicts, resort to using aggression in the classroom (Huesmann, 1988). A major challenge for early childhood teachers is to encourage children to acknowledge angry feelings and to help them learn to express anger in positive and effective ways.



## Conflict Resolution Activities Aligned with Multiple Intelligence Area

Multiple Intelligence Area	Characteristics	Conflict Resolution Activities
<b>Visual-Spatial</b> 	Those with strong spatial intelligence are often proficient at solving puzzles. They have a strong visual memory and are often artistically inclined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have learners draw a story board of events or mind map on butcher paper</li> <li>• Use large puzzles pieces to connect and check for understanding</li> <li>• Design a map with roads, houses, trees, and flowers to identify training concepts</li> </ul>
<b>Verbal- Linguistic</b>  Verbal Linguistic	Speaking, storytelling, writing, listening, using humor, remembering information, using language cleverly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use the counting system to separate learners into groups</li> <li>• Use flashcards to define words</li> <li>• Create a short poem on topic being taught</li> <li>• Design a board game to include course content</li> </ul>
<b>Logical-Mathematical</b> 	Problem solving, categorizing, classifying, working with geometric shapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have learners create charts, diagrams, and graphs to assess learning</li> <li>• Use the scientific method to identify and explain training concepts</li> <li>• Have learners create an outline to write about what they learned</li> </ul>
<b>Bodily-Kinesthetic</b> 	Dancing, sports, acting, anything requiring physical coordination, creating with hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have learners raise left hand, or stand up if they know an answer</li> <li>• Play a game that incorporate body parts (i.e. jump 3 times if you are wearing red)</li> </ul>
<b>Musical-Rhythmic</b> 	Singing, playing musical instruments, composing music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have learners write a song about what they learned</li> <li>• Have learners compose a RAP song to concepts they have learned (Verb rap song)</li> <li>• Play musical chairs based on training concepts</li> </ul>
<b>Interpersonal</b> 	Talking, socializing with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have learners create a case study</li> <li>• Break up learners into small groups and let them select a person to speak for the group</li> <li>• Start a training by having learners share something about their culture</li> </ul>
<b>Intrapersonal</b> 	Figuring out their own strengths and weaknesses, analyzing, understanding themselves and how they relate to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tape training content words on Legos or blocks and build a training concept framework</li> <li>• Have learners use play-doh to create food items and share nutritional facts</li> <li>• Design a storyboard to share training concepts</li> </ul>
<b>Naturalistic</b> 	Playing with animals, plants, playing outdoors, gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use shells or river rocks for counters</li> <li>• Have learners guess the number of rocks in a guessing jar to win a prize</li> <li>• Take a nature walk during break</li> <li>• Use sketches of leaves, clouds, or animal shapes to identify training concepts.</li> </ul>





## Learning Objectives & Outcomes

### **Participants will be able to ...**

- Identify methods on teaching children's values and identifying their own values
- Identify how to teach children conflict resolution skills
- Identify conflict and stress and strategies on what to do during a stressful time

### **Participants will learn...**

- Identify 2-4 methods on teaching children's values and identifying their own values
- Identify how to teach children conflict resolution skills
- Identify 3 strategies on what to do during a stressful time



## Agenda

### Part 1: Teaching Children Values

- What are your Values?

### Part 2: How to Teach Children Conflict Resolution Skills

- Environment
- ECERS-R
- Classroom Environment
- Optimal Learning Environment
- Infant and Preschool Environment

### Part 3: Conflict and Stress

### Part 4: What to do During a Stressful Time



## Part 1: Teaching Children Values

Offer a good example for children to follow when it comes to values

Teaching children's values is the process by which you help them develop their moral compasses. The values children learn as kids will affect how they see the world and behave as adults. While it may seem impossible to explain the importance of honesty or compassion to a child, showing children how good morals affect others can have a great influence on them.

- Define the values that you feel are most important
- Encourage self direction by explaining how to understand feelings
- Explain natural consequences of bad or improper choices
- Offer a good example for children to follow when it comes to values





## Part 1: Teaching Children Values

**Step 1:** While we want children to be honest, compassionate, kind, respectful, responsible and generous, it may be too confusing for children to understand the importance of all values. Rank morals and teach them one at a time so children aren't overwhelmed and have a proper chance to learn the importance of each facet of morality.

**Step 2:** Self direction entails teaching children to use their own feelings and sense of responsibility to decide whether something is right or wrong, and to decide the course of action. Self direction takes the place of teaching many morals individually. Talk to children and create several hypothetical instances where they would need to assess their feelings to make a choice, like a friend being bullied or accidentally taking a toy that doesn't belong to them.





## Part 1: Teaching Children Values

**Step 3:** This teaches children to look past the moment to see what the consequences to their actions are. For instance, if children continually fight with friends, note that one day their friends may not want to play with them. If children are caught lying, explain that it can make people doubt their stories. Also teach that good morals also have good consequences. Always being responsible means that someone may ask for their help, and always being kind could net them more friends to play with.

**Step 4:** If you try to teach children good morals while exhibiting less-than-exemplary morals yourself, you send a mixed and confusing message to children. If you make a promise, follow through. Show compassion by taking time to listen. Break up fights in a fair and even manner and check your temper. Children will soon learn through your example that not only is morality important, but a desirable way to deal with others





## Part 2: How to Teach Children Conflict Resolution Skills

It can be difficult for a children to see through the argument to the root of the issue. By identifying that there is a problem, you allow the children to take a step back and calm down.

Communication is essential to resolving conflict, whether it is among the children themselves, child care providers or even parents and child care providers . Parents and providers who openly communicate with one another regarding the care of children can avoid parents being dissatisfied with children's activities and supervision. Child care providers who voice their differences of opinion with one another throughout the course of the day can avert future blowups. Childcare providers who teach children to do the same can provide the children with some of the necessary skills to resolve issues on their own by talking through their problems.

- Identify that the child is experiencing a conflict
- When you hear voices start to rise, come in calmly and say something like, "I hear that there is a problem with (state the problem you see). Why don't we figure out what we can do about this problem?"





## How to Teach Children Conflict Resolution Skills

Your posture tells the children that everyone here is an equal part in solving the conflict. When you stand from above, you take the power from the children and transfer it to yourself.

Approaching the conflict between children in the right way can help mitigate the tension and teach them conflict resolution skills. Childcare providers should calmly approach the children while acknowledging the problem and the children's feelings. Conducting a short question-and-answer session to gain the necessary information and then restating the problem to the children can help them see the conflict. Finally, asking the children involved to take part in the resolution by posing their own solutions and choosing one together should help dissolve the issue.



## How to Teach Children Conflict Resolution Skills

- ▶ Come down to the children's level.
- ▶ Speaking from above will only worsen the problem.
- ▶ Sit with the children, kneel, or sit in a low chair
- ▶ Have the children take turns recounting their conflict
- ▶ Start with telling them that each will get a turn and that interrupting is not allowed
- ▶ Repeat what the children have told you in your own words so that they know you understand the situation and their individual feelings.
- ▶ Ask for ideas about compromise. Let each child give her own answer for how she would like to see the conflict solved.







## How to Teach Children Conflict Resolution Skills

- Suspend your own opinion. Do not tell the children how to resolve the conflict; this would not teach them anything
- Recount the conflict and the solution that the children come up with
- When a decision is reached, recap the conflict and how the solution will fix the issue
- Take action! Let the children put their solution into motion
- Stay with them to smooth out any bumps in the same third-party manner that you have maintained
- Children will naturally discard ideas that do not seem fair if they are given time to think and talk them through.





## How to Teach Children Conflict Resolution Skills

Observation also can be key to avoiding and resolving conflict in day care centers. Childcare providers should simply be more observant and, in doing so, step in when it appears that a potential conflict may arise. In most cases, the provider can do so prior to any conflict by sensing the child's frustration. Acknowledging the child's frustration and directing his/her frustration elsewhere can help avoid conflict. This will help solidify the lessons that the children have learned since they can clearly see how they have moved from conflict to resolution. It will help the situation make sense.



## Environment

The environment of the day care center can be altered or used to mitigate conflict, as well. For instance, if children continually are fighting over the same toys or playground equipment, having multiple toys or pieces of equipment can help resolve the problem. Strategically placing equipment in different places throughout the facility can make it much simpler for the day care provider to remove a contentious child from a conflict and mediate it.

**Analyze the classroom** and see if there are plenty of spaces to play and enough toys and materials to share. Conflict happens more frequently in a closed-in play space with a single entry. Improving accessibility will minimize opportunities for conflict.





## Environment

**Follow a regular routine and keep the physical classroom orderly to promote a peaceful atmosphere.**

Young children thrive on predictability. It's particularly important to have meals, snack breaks, bathroom breaks and naps occur at scheduled times.

**Prepare all classroom materials before class starts.**

If impatient preschool children have to wait for you to gather materials or cut something out, conflict and misbehavior may break out.

- ▶ Analyze the classroom
- ▶ Follow a regular routine, and keep the physical classroom orderly to promote a peaceful atmosphere
- ▶ Prepare all classroom materials before class starts



## Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS-R)

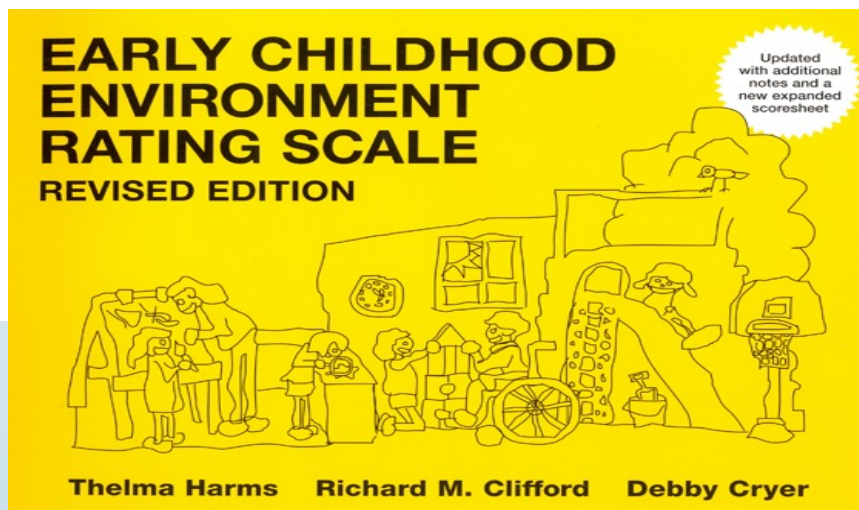
The ECERS-R has a 43-item scale and covers seven categories:

- Personal Care Routines
- Space and Furnishings
- Language-Reasoning
- Activities
- Interactions
- Program Structure
- Parents and Staff

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition (ECERS-R) provides an overall picture of the surroundings that have been created for the children and adults who share an early childhood setting. The ECERS consists of 43 items that assess the quality of the early childhood environment including use of space, materials and experiences to enhance children's development, daily schedule, and supervision.

Go to the website for more information: <http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/>

You will also find The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised at that website (ITERS)





## Classroom Environment

- Create clear visual boundaries, making it apparent to children where learning areas stop and start. Define childcare areas with shelving units, equipment with backs, area rugs, etc.
- Each learning area should be separate, and its own entity and area
- Strategically arrange your room to eliminate runways. Long, straight isles and paths encourage running
- Avoid having any "blind spots" or areas where children cannot be seen
- Separate quiet and loud areas so that children can respect each other's play experiences
- Create a soft, quiet area where a child can choose to be alone
- Have any needed supplies and materials close and accessible to the children (smocks, paper towels, paintbrushes, garbage can, etc) to encourage independence
- Areas should indicate logical use of the materials. For example, if the tables are located right by the manipulative shelf, children are given the cue to take those toys to the table



## Classroom Environment

When developing the layout of a preschool classroom, divide the room up into the necessary sections. These include, but are not limited to, art, blocks, dramatic play, manipulative, music, library, and science. Some instructors also include a writing area near the library, and others are lucky enough to have an indoor playground as a part of the classroom experience. Remember that certain areas require more space than others, such as dramatic play and blocks. These areas tend to be noisier than others, and as such, they should be grouped together in the classroom. Quieter activities like art and reading should also be placed together on the opposite side of the room, if possible. To mark the boundaries between the areas, use shelving units or colored duct tape on the floor.

It's important to keep the center of the classroom free from large objects as that's where the children assemble in a large circle for story time or show-and-tell. The walls of the preschool classroom can be decorated with seasonal decorations, samples of the children's art, a large wall calendar labeled with important dates and activities, a weather chart, and an attendance chart with a picture of each child.



## Optimal Learning Environment

- ▶ Infants:
  - 'Simple' toys such as pacifiers, rattles and teething rings for sucking and grasping
  - Easy to look at objects like a rag doll with a pleasant face
  - Balls, containers, small toys, and simple picture books
- ▶ Toddlers:
  - Puzzles, dress-up clothes, musical instruments
  - More complex picture books
- ▶ Preschool :
  - Same and different' games and books that demonstrate the idea that "one of these items does not belong to this group
  - Sand and water with measuring containers of various sizes

The optimal environment is one that is geared to the child. Childcare providers play a large role in the learning environment. Even with the best materials, children need guidance and adult interaction to broaden their learning experience.







## Infant Environment

What do you see in these pictures as helpful?

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What doesn't work?

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Picture 1 - Helpful: The teacher is able to see all the children in the area

Picture 1 - Not helpful: The children can't reach the toys. This may lead to climbing, frustration

Picture 2 - Helpful: The children have access to the toys

Picture 2 - Not helpful: The books are on top of the counter, not available to the children

What other things do you see in these pictures?

Picture 1.



Picture 2.





## Preschool Environment

The impact of the physical environment is often overlooked....quiet or active, stimulating or boring, individual or group, the mix of environments a child is exposed to has a tremendous impact on their development. Workspaces, play spaces, learning spaces, personal spaces –all must meet the developmental needs and requirements of the child. Make sure the childcare environment is set up with the child's perspective in mind, so that the child can feel the most comfortable when being away from home.





## Part 3: Conflict and Stress

- ▶ Muscle tension
- ▶ Faster heartbeat
- ▶ A “knot” in your stomach
- ▶ Talking louder or faster
- ▶ Loss of or gain in appetite
- ▶ Headaches
- ▶ Inability to sleep
- ▶ Frequent crying
- ▶ Frequent forgetting
- ▶ Loss of sense of humor



Conflict is a normal part of life. After all, two people can't be expected to agree on everything, all the time. Learning how to deal with conflict – rather than avoiding it – is crucial. When conflict is mismanaged, it can cause great harm, but when handled in a respectful, positive way, conflict provides an opportunity to teach valuable lessons.

Conflict triggers strong emotions and can lead to hurt feelings, disappointment, and discomfort. When handled in an unhealthy manner, it can cause irreparable rifts, resentments, and break-ups. But when conflict is resolved in a healthy way, it increases our understanding of one another, builds trust, and strengthens our relationship bonds.

If you are out of touch with your feelings or so stressed that you can only pay attention to a limited number of emotions, you won't be able to understand your own needs. And, if you don't understand your own needs, you will have a difficult time communicating with the children and staying in touch with what's really troubling you.



## Part 3: Conflict and Stress

- State your needs
- Avoid using insults or blaming someone
- If you feel yourself reacting, give yourself permission to take a break
- Try to listen to what is being said, instead of thinking about what you're going to say next
- Compare what you're saying with what you really mean
- Think about lots of ways to solve the problem
- Decide who will take what actions after reaching an agreement
- It is OK if you make mistakes. Be kind to yourself
- If you can't work things out, find a person you respect to help bring about a solution
- Talk to one of the staff listed, or call one of the numbers on this flyer

**Stress interferes with the ability to resolve conflict by limiting your ability to:**

- Accurately read another person's nonverbal communication
- Hear what someone is really saying
- Be aware of your own feelings
- Be in touch with your deep-rooted needs
- Communicate your needs clearly



## Part 3: Conflict and Stress

### Why emotional awareness is a key factor in resolving conflict

- Emotional awareness—the consciousness of your *moment-to-moment* emotional experience—and the ability to manage all of your feelings appropriately is the basis of a communication process that can resolve conflict.
- Emotional awareness helps you:
  - Understand what is troubling other people
  - Understand yourself, including what is really troubling you
  - Stay motivated until the conflict is resolved
  - Communicate clearly and effectively
  - Attract and influence others



## Part 4: What to do During a Stressful Time

### Do one or more of these:

- Go for a walk or step outside for some fresh air
- Take a coffee or snack break
- Take deep breaths
- Talk to a friend or someone who is caring
- Write down your thoughts and feelings
- Listen to music you enjoy

Being able to manage and relieve stress in the moment is the key to staying balanced, focused, and in control, no matter what challenges you face. If you don't know how to stay centered and in control of yourself, you will become overwhelmed in conflict situations and unable to respond in healthy ways.



# Conflict Resolution Activities for Children Aligned with Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences

Activities for Children	Learning Styles	Multiple Intelligences
<p><b>#1 Fairly Tale Conflict</b> Read a fairy tale to children (Goldilocks and the Three Bears) and discuss the conflict in the story and what could have been to resolve the conflict.</p>	Auditory	Verbal Linguistic
<p><b>#2 Bingo</b> Use bingo card with “Feeling Faces” (see resources)</p>	Auditory Kinesthetic	Logical Mathematic
<p><b>#3 Tic-Tac-Toe</b> Draw an “X” or “O” over the picture selected. Give advice for the problem in the picture selected. Get 5 pictures in a row, any direction, to win a point.</p>	Visual Kinesthetic	Logical Mathematic
<p><b>#4 Conflict Flashcards</b> Use flashcards to introduce words or phrases on conflict resolution. Sign Happy and you know it.</p>	Visual Kinesthetic	Musical Rhythmic
<p><b>#5 Problem Solving Scenarios</b> Show student a problem-solving scenario card to describe what they would do in this case.</p>	Auditory	Verbal Linguistic
<p><b>#6 Emotions Scavenger Hunt</b> When children experience conflict have them hunt and identify their emotion written on rock.</p>	Auditory	Naturalistic
<p><b>#7 Roll an Emotion</b> Use a cube shaped box to make a dice with pictures or words of emotions written n each side of the box. Roll dice, and have student describe open-ended questions.</p>	Visual Kinesthetic	Bodily Kinesthetic
<p><b>#8 Play dough</b> Provide student with play dough to make a face on how he/she feel.</p>	Kinesthetic	Intrapersonal
<p><b># 9 How I Feel Questions</b> Ask students how they feel when.....</p>	Auditory	Interpersonal
<p><b>#10 Spin the Wheel</b> Student will spin the wheel and use an “I Message” to explain</p>	Visual Kinesthetic	Visual Spatial



## Review

### Part 1: Teaching Children Values

-What are your Values?

### Part 2: How to Teach Children Conflict Resolution Skills

-Environment

-ECERS-R

-Classroom Environment

-Optimal Learning Environment

-Infant and Preschool Environment

### Part 3: Conflict and Stress

### Part 4: What to do During a Stressful Time







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