(i) WHAT IS IT?

Promoting Problem-Solving is a set of strategies to help teach students specific steps to resolve disagreements and conflict with their peers.

(👁) WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Ann and Sadie are fighting over some blocks in the play area. Their teacher approaches and asks, "What are you feeling? What's the problem?" She references the *Solution Kit* cards to help them brainstorm different ways to solve their problem. They decide that they could 1) ignore, 2) take turns, or 3) ask nicely. After discussing if the solution is safe and fair, and considering how the other would feel, the girls decide to take turns with the blocks. Their teacher says, "I am proud of you both for problem solving together!"

(★) WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Problem-solving skills training is an effective way to empower students to independently resolve conflict. Kindergarteners are still learning perspective-taking and need assistance in understanding how their actions impact others. When a problem arises among students, teachers can use problem-solving strategies to help students identify the problem, take others' perspective, and come up with and try a solution.

Problem-Solving Steps

Introducing effective problem-solving includes teaching students how to…

- ☑ **Recognize** a problem.

- ☑ **Brainstorm** multiple solutions.

- ☑ **Understand** the consequences of each solution.

- ☑ **Agree** on a solution together.

- ☑ **Try** out the solution.

Using these steps not only helps solve problems in-the-moment, but can also help to stop problems *before* they escalate.

TIPS FOR PROMOTING PROBLEM-SOLVING

1. **WHEN problems occur**
   - ☑ Help students *recognize* and *describe* the problem.
     - Encourage students to discuss what they and others are feeling.
   - ☑ Encourage students to *brainstorm* potential solutions.
     - Consider using the CSEFEL *Solutions Kit* cards to present possible solutions. Rather than focusing on what will work best, generate as many solutions as possible (see *Introduction to the Solutions Kit* activity).
   - ☑ Discuss consequences of possible solutions.
     - Have students consider…
       - Is the solution safe?
       - Is the solution fair?
       - How would everyone feel?
   - ☑ Act on the best solution.
     - Have students agree on which solution to try. If it does not work, try out another one of the suggested solutions.

2. **PREPARE students to handle problems before they occur**
   - ☑ Stage or intentionally provide play opportunities that would require the use of problem-solving skills (e.g., needing to share blocks).
   - ☑ Play "What would you do?" with students.
     - Present possible scenarios/problems and have students think of solutions.
   - ☑ Select books where there is a problem and encourage students to solve it.
     - Pause during reading and prompt students to generate possible solutions to the problems faced by characters.

RESOURCES THAT SUPPORT PROBLEM-SOLVING

Solution Kit Cards I or II
Available as PDFs
([Solution Kit Cards I](), [Solution Kit Cards II]())
CSEFEL©

Solution Kit Activity
[Available as PDF]()
CASTL©

Problem Solver
[Available as PDF]()
CSEFEL©