



May



## Get children involved in solving problems

Take advantage of daily opportunities to encourage children to solve problems. Help the children describe the problem and encourage them to draw on their knowledge and experiences to think of alternative solutions and to decide on the best option. The better a child's problem-solving skills, the better prepared he will be for understanding stories, which often centre around a problem that must be solved. Good problem solving abilities also prepare children for success in a variety of academic subjects, such as math, history and geography.

Ramani, G. B., Zippert, E., Schweitzer, S., & Pan, S. (2014). Preschool children's joint block building during a guided play activity. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 35(4), 326–336.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

Draw your child's attention to problems as they arise and provide her with opportunities to think of solutions. For example, "Uh-oh. Your lunch bag is missing. What else can we use to carry your lunch?"

### TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

When small problems arise during the day, encourage the children to offer a solution. For example, "Oh no, we've run out of glue to finish our art. What can we do?" When possible, give the children the chance to try out their solutions, even if you think there's a better one.

Daily Activities

Pretend Play

Book Reading

On the Go

As you play cars with your child, introduce a problem and encourage your child to solve it. For example, "Oh no, I think my car ran out of gas! What can I do?" If your child can't think of a solution, offer one yourself. For example, "I know! You can go to a gas station and get some gas in a big can and bring it back for me!"

While reading a new book, point out a problem that the main character is facing, and ask your child to think about how it could be solved. For example, "Rapunzel is trapped in the tower! What do you think she could do to escape?"

While at the grocery store, draw your child's attention to an item on your shopping list that isn't available, and ask her to think of a solution. For example, "Oh no, we were going to have broccoli with our chicken tonight, but the broccoli is sold out. What should we do?"

When the children are playing with toy trains, cars, or trucks, join in the play with your own toy and introduce a problem for the children to solve. For example, "Oh, no, my train has stalled! How will I get it back to the station?"

When finished reading a book, talk about the problem in the story and ask the children to think of alternative ways it could have been solved. For example, "What else could the little pigs have done to protect themselves from the wolf?"

While on a walk, point out a problem and encourage the children to think of a solution. For example, "There's a lot of litter on the grass around here. What do you think could be done to stop people from littering here?"