

Strategies to Assist with Problem Solving Skills

- Use **questions** to structure the problem solving process:
 - How** do you know it is a problem?
 - What** can you **see** e.g. broken glass, crying, fists clenched
 - What** can you **hear** e.g. alarm, humming, soft voice
 - What** can you **feel** e.g. headache, butterflies in tummy
 - What** can you **remember** e.g. other times like this?
 - What** will happen next? i.e. cause/effect
 - What** do you need to do about it?
 - How** will you do it?
- Encourage the child to:
 - Stop,**
 - Think,**
 - Find a **Solution**, rather than to act impulsively.
- Give the child possible choices when verbalising their solutions
- **Think out loud.** Understand that the child needs to learn how to solve problems. Demonstrate how to solve problems at every opportunity. Create opportunities to make mistakes and problem solve. They may need you to show them, demonstrate and talk through the process.
- Use comics, TV programs and stories to identify problems, cause and effect, consequences, emotions, and the solutions. Read the beginning of a story, identify the problem, close the book and think **out loud** about the possible solutions.
- Identify the clues (see, hear, feel & remember) around them in their environment.
 - See:** flashing lights, facial expressions, body stance and distance
 - Hear:** angry voices, bells, telephones, people talking or silence
 - Feel:** tight jaw, loose muscles, nausea, headaches
 - Remember:** remind the child of other events like this one. Use concrete examples/visuals to assist learning. Practise by asking the child to draw the problem, use arrows to link the problem to the solutions (use only key words or pictures)
- Avoid problems: practise using the strategies of see, hear, feel and remember to tell you a problem may happen. Show and tell the child in day to day living situations e.g. running out of milk, doing homework
- Teach these skills when the child is calm and during everyday situations, particularly those that don't involve emotions or conflict e.g. running out of milk. Repeat the strategy over and over in a calm situation before attempting to use it in situations which may be emotional. Being able to problem solve in difficult situations is the last step in learning the skill of problem solving.

