

SOCIAL SKILLS ACTIVITY

INTRODUCTION TO THE “SOLUTION KIT”



Supporting social problem-solving empowers children to independently and effectively resolve disagreements with peers. In order to solve problems, children need a variety of skills, such as taking others’ perspectives and recognizing other’s feelings. The *Solution Kit* provides a structure to help children successfully address peer conflicts. When adults intentionally model and scaffold children through effective problem-solving strategies, children learn that conflicts can be resolved.

This activity introduces problem-solving skills to children using CSEFEL’s *Solution Kit*.

CORE SKILL OBJECTIVES		INTENTIONAL TEACHING PRACTICES
	Children will:	Teachers will:
SOCIAL SKILLS	◆ Use Problem-Solving Skills to Resolve Peer Conflict	◆ Narrate Problems and Solutions
	◆ Develop Sense of Empathy	◆ Reflect the Problem and Feelings
	◆ Collaborate and Work Together with Peers	◆ Prompt Children to Find/Accept a Solution

GET READY

MATERIALS

- ◆ CSEFEL *Solution Kit Cue Cards*
- ◆ CSEFEL *Problem Solver Poster*
- ◆ Social scenario prompts (included)
- ◆ Hat, basket, or bucket
- ◆ Shoe-box or other small box (to become a “toolbox”)

PREPARATION

- ◆ Create a “toolbox” (see Additional Resources).
- ◆ Cut out *Solution Kit Cue Cards* and put in “toolbox” (laminare if possible).
- ◆ Cut out social scenario prompts and put in hat.

TEACHING TIPS

BIG PICTURE	KNOW THE DEVELOPMENT
It can be tempting to solve problems for children. However, it’s critical that we scaffold rather than take over the problem-solving process. Doing so helps children feel empowered and supports their own development of problem-solving skills.	Kindergartners are still learning to take the perspective of others. These techniques are great ways to help them think about how others might feel in different situations. However, you should not expect kindergartners to take others’ perspectives or problem-solve independently – you will need to provide support to help children be successful.

1. INTRODUCE

- ◆ Show children the *Problem Solver Poster* and walk through each step on the poster.
- ◆ Choose one *Solution Kit Cue Card*:
 - Ask children to guess what the card means.
 - Clearly explain the strategy, and give/ask for examples of when to use them.
- ◆ Repeat for each *Solution Kit Cue Card*.

2. PRACTICE PROBLEM-SOLVING

- ◆ Choose one child to select a social scenario from the hat, and read aloud.
- ◆ Guide children through the problem-solving steps using the *Problem Solver Poster*:
 - Step 1: What is my problem?** Read the scenario out loud, and ask children to identify the problem.
 - Step 2: Think, think, think of some solutions.** Ask children to choose *Solution Kit Cue Cards* that would work for the scenario, and walk through how they would solve the problem.
 - Step 3: What would happen if...?** Have children consider whether it's safe, fair, and how everyone would feel until they can agree on a solution.
 - Step 4: Give it a try!** Have children to act out how they would implement the solution.
- ◆ Repeat until all social scenarios are presented or until each child gets a chance to choose.

Narrate Problems and Solutions

"Hmm, what's the problem here?" or
 "What problem do we need to help her solve?"

"It seems like this kid wants to play with his friends, but he's not sure how to join. I wonder what he could do?
 Let's look at the tools in our *Solution Kit* to give him some ideas!"

Reflect the Problem and Feelings

Prompt children to reflect what the character is feeling.

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"I think I'd be upset if this happened, what about you?"

"This sounds like a really tough problem... How do you think she is feeling?"

Prompt Children to Find/Accept a Solution

"Would it be **fair** to take turns playing the game?"

"Do you think it would be **safe** to play together on the slide?
 ...Hmm I'm not sure there would be room for two of you!"

"How do you think the other kid would **feel** if you ignored him when he asked to borrow your toy?..."

3. REVIEW

- ◆ Ask children to tell you what some of the solutions were, either by memory or using cards as prompts.

ADAPT

MORE CHALLENGE: Have children think of times when they could use *Solution Kit* problem solving strategies in the classroom.

MORE SUPPORT: Present only a few *Solution Kit Cue Cards* for children to choose from instead of all during Step 2.

KEEP IT GOING

The *Solution Kit* will become a part of your regular routine. Below are ways to incorporate using Intentional Teaching Practices for Supporting Problem Solving with Peers throughout the day.

Remember to...

- ◆ Prompt children to identify emotions (use the *Feelings Chart* when possible).
- ◆ Use consistent vocabulary to help avoid confusion.
- ◆ Acknowledge and give positive attention when problems are being resolved.

Use Throughout the Day – Before Problems Occur

Whenever you anticipate that a problem may arise, ask children to consider solutions *before* it occurs. Also, intentionally build in opportunities to recognize and identify when book, puppet, or pretend play characters are experiencing problems or conflict, and ask children to brainstorm what the character(s) can do to solve.

Narrate Problems and Solutions

“I just went to sit down on my favorite chair, but (other teacher) was already sitting there! I *really* want to sit down... what should I do? Let’s look at our *Problem Solver* poster to help me find a solution...”

Narrate Problems and Solutions

If there is a new game/toy: “This new (toy) is really cool. I can see by your smiles that a lot of you want a chance to play with it. What can we do to make sure that everyone gets a turn? Which solution will work?”

Narrate Problems and Solutions

During pretend play: “Uh-oh, the bunny didn’t hop high enough and accidentally knocked over the bird’s nest! The bird is very upset, what do you think the bunny can do to help solve their problem?”

Narrate Problems and Solutions

Using books: “Hmm the boy in our story snatched the toy from his brother. His brother does not seem very happy. What could he have done instead? Which *Solution Kit Cue Card* could he have used?”

Use Throughout the Day – When Problems Occur

Whenever problems occur, use them as an opportunity to problem solve. Reference the *Problem Solver Poster* and/or the *Solution Kit Cue Cards*.

Reflect the Problem and Feelings

“(Child) seems very frustrated right now. Why are you frustrated, (Child)? ...Oh, so you both want to use the same marker...”

Prompt Children to Find/Accept a Solution

“...Hmm what can you do? Let’s look at our *Problem Solver* poster to decide!”

“Let’s think, would it be safe to...? Would it be fair to...? How will everyone feel...?”

RESOURCES

- ◆ *Solution Kit* label
- ◆ Sample problem solving scenarios

Source:

Graphics from *The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)*

Solution Kit Toolbox



Toolbox instructions and suggestions:

- ◆ Gather a shoe box (if unavailable, you can use another small box with a lid).
- ◆ Decorate/Cover the box and attach the *Solution Kit* label included (or create your own).

Sample Social Problem Solving Scenarios:

A classmate takes the blue marker that you were about to pick up.

You want to swing on the swings, but all of them are taken.

Two of your friends are playing a really fun game. You want to play, too.

Your teacher asked you to be quiet, but your classmate keeps talking to you.

When you were playing outside, a classmate kept chasing you and would not leave you alone.

Your class was getting in a line and one of your classmates kept trying to stand in front of you.

You are trying to tell your classmate something but s/he is ignoring you.

A classmate says that he does not like your new shoes.

Your friend was supposed to give you a turn to play with the race car, but still hasn't.

You are playing a board game and your classmate skips your turn.

You are telling your friend a story when a classmate comes over and interrupts you.

A classmate is calling you names that are not very nice.

There are only 3 chairs at the table you want to play at, but there are 4 of you who want to play.

You want to play with a puzzle, but your classmate won't let go of the box!

You think that you should play the 'dad' but your classmate thinks he should play the 'dad'.

Two classmates both want to be line leader.