
Supporting Children's Social Problem Solving During COVID-19

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INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the “Supporting Children’s Social Problem Solving During COVID-19” professional development webinar from the University of Virginia. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

Goals

- ◆ Prepare classrooms and children to limit or prevent social problems from occurring.
- ◆ Consider how our cultures and biases influence how we interact and solve social problems with others.
- ◆ Implement and modify the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations’ “Problem Solving Steps.”
- ◆ Reflect on your current practices and plan to use concrete strategies to support children’s social problem solving.

Activity

- ◆ Watch the webinar.
- ◆ After watching, use the questions below to reflect on how you can support children’s social problem solving.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support children’s social problem solving.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention in the webinar? What made that fact, idea, or example meaningful to you?

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- ◆ Everyone solves social problems in their own way. Share your social problem-solving strategies with a partner or small group:

- How do you solve social problems with members of your family? People in your community? People outside of your community?
- How do your or your family's culture, values, perspectives, and practices influence the way you solve social problems?
- How are your problem-solving strategies similar to or different from your partner's strategies? Why?

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- ◆ In the webinar, Caitlin Powell encourages teachers to determine the root causes of common social problems so they can prepare the classroom and children to avoid or handle those problems.

- What common social problems have you witnessed in previous years? What are some root causes of these problems?
- What new or different social problems do you predict children will have because of COVID restrictions and guidelines?
- How could you prepare children to solve social problems before they occur? For example, how could you prepare classroom spaces and materials to avoid or limit social problems this year?

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- ◆ The presenters encourage teachers to be involved and flexible when supporting children to solve social problems. They recommend following and modifying the "Problem Solving Steps" from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI):

- Identify the problem
- Think of some solutions
- Ask "what would happen if...?"
- Try out the solution

1. Review the NCPMI problem-solving resources (see *Additional Resources* section on p. 3).
2. Based on the needs of the children in your classroom and your current learning environment, plan to introduce and support children to use the steps to solve social problems:
 - When and how will you introduce this problem-solving strategy?
 - When will you practice the problem-solving steps with children?
 - How will you modify this strategy to work in your current learning environment and to support and meet each child where they are?
 - How will you adjust your strategies when or if your school changes its learning format?
3. Regularly check in on your plan. Assess its impact on children and adjust as needed.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about how we can support children's social problem solving:

- ◆ **Source:** The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations
- ◆ **Guide:** Resource Library
- ◆ **Link:** <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/resources/index.html>
- ◆ **Description:** Use keyword “problem solving” to find a variety of resources to support children’s social problem solving. Many resources are available in multiple languages to support dual language learners and multilingual children.



- ◆ **Source:** PBS Kids for Parents
- ◆ **Video:** “Learning to Resolve Conflicts with Role Play”
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-and-experiments/learning-to-resolve-conflicts-with-role-play>
- ◆ **Description:** A guided role-playing activity for caregivers. Use stuffed animals to act out a problem and find solutions.