

Problem Solving Matrix: Helping Staff Plan

This activity gives you a chance to practice working with staff members around problem solving. Choose a staff member who knows the classroom well and is interested in talking about problem solving. This might be someone who comes to you with concerns about his or her classroom or who has a number of conflicts in the room regularly. Ask the staff member to make an activity matrix like the example below. Together, brainstorm times that problems are most likely to occur in their classroom or program. Work together to identify ways to teach children to solve each of the problems. After you have finished, reflect on the process. Think about how you can use this process with other staff members and how you can help staff members be intentional about supporting problem solving. Follow up with the first staff member to observe and provide feedback on how they are using the strategies they identified.

Activity / Routine	Typical Problems	Strategies for teaching problem solving
Arrival	<i>Sometimes children get upset when a favorite area of the program is closed (e.g., video games in school-age programs, water table in early childhood programs).</i>	<i>Help the child identify their feelings and think of solutions. For example, pick another area to play or write a request for the area to be open tomorrow.</i>
Free play	<i>Sometimes children get upset when there is a new toy and not enough for all the children to play with them.</i>	<i>Help the child identify their feelings and think of solutions. For example, pick a different toy, take turns, ask a teacher for help, play together.</i>
Group activities		
Sports/Movement		
Snack/Meals		
Outdoor play		
Departure		