

J A N U A R Y 2 0 2 0

Timely Topics

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- *Avoiding Temper Tantrums
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Save the Date

Parenting Classes:

- *Avoiding Temper Tantrums
- *Tips To Parenting Two-year-olds

PLEASE RSVP
ADULTS ONLY
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Flexible Thinking & Problem Solving

Does your child ever get upset when playing with other children because something didn't go their way? Maybe they have a meltdown when someone is playing with the toy that they always like to play with. Often meltdowns or aggressive behavior in social situations occur because the child has a deficit in problem solving skills. If we can teach children how to problem solve in situations with others, we can minimize the number of tantrums, the amount of tattling, the fights between siblings, and the times our child hits to get what they wanted.

Through the process of teaching a child to problem solve, we are teaching them how to be a flexible thinker. Flexible thinking allows children to look at the situation differently rather than being focused on only one solution. Through teaching flexible thinking, we are helping children "unlearn" their old ways of doing things and recognizing that there are many "right" ways to do things. Just as we have to stretch our muscles to keep them from getting stiff and working correctly, we must also stretch our brains by finding different ways of doing things.

Steps to Teaching Problem Solving

Continue on to page 3 to learn five different steps to help guide your child to learn problem solving and new behaviors to encourage problem solve during frustrating situations.

Play Activities



Try these activities as a way to interact with your child this month while working on problem solving, self-regulation, communication, personal-social skills, fine motor, and gross motor skills

Make a sensory board for your child to touch. Place a bunch of different items on the board or in a container. As they touch each item, have them describe how it feels. If your child is nonverbal, you can describe how each item feels as they are touching them. If your child has sensory sensitivity, have them watch you first, stay with you, and then start with 1 finger to touch!



Provide your child with some playdoh and place some glitter on the table. Have your child work on fine motor skills by mixing in the glitter with the playdoh. See if they can get glitter mixed throughout all of the playdoh. Practice with just mixing with one hand as well.

Put pipe cleaners through a colander and have your child pull them out with one hand working on their pincer grip (e.g. pulling with their thumb and index finger). Have your child pull out all of one color first. Make sure to supervise your child during this activity as pipe cleaners can sometimes be sharp on the ends.



Steps for Teaching Problem Solving

- **Step 1: Anticipate**

The first and most important step is to anticipate when a problem may arise for your child. What situations are harder for your child? When are there usually meltdowns? Are they more common in the morning or in the afternoon? Are they likely to happen when playing with a specific sibling? Do they happen when playing with specific toys? Learning to anticipate these problem solving situations will help you to feel like you have greater control of the situation and can prepare. Addition, you can teach your child the skills they need to develop to replace the problem behavior.

- **Step 2: Be Close**

Once you have determined some situations where the problem situations are more common, make sure that you are physically close to your child during those situations. By being close, you can possibly **prevent** the meltdown from occurring by stepping in before it is too late or you can help model what to do once they become frustrated. The idea is to be close enough that you can turn these situations into practice opportunities and prompt the steps.

- **Step 3: Provide Support**

We can **teach** children many times how to solve problems but until they practice many times, it will be difficult for them to implement it on their own. There are many different ways you may

need to provide support to your child as they are learning to problem solve. First you need to **teach** them simple problem solving through playing toys and activities alone. Then, as they interact with others, you might need to physically help your child by staying in proximity to them and showing them what to do. They may also have tantrums and become aggressive, and you can redirect them. You can verbally prompt your child for suggestions or past ways they have solved the problem. You can model, or show them what to do again and again in the actual situations.

- **Step 4: Multiple Solutions**

In order to encourage flexible thinking in children, we want to teach them that there are multiple ways to solve a problem. Prompting for multiple solutions will help your child from becoming dependent on the same strategies for every problem. We want to encourage children to persist in trying multiple strategies if the first one may not work. Eventually, you can eliminate these strategies so that your child learns to rely on themselves when thinking of solutions, rather than waiting for prompts. Practice! Practice! Practice!

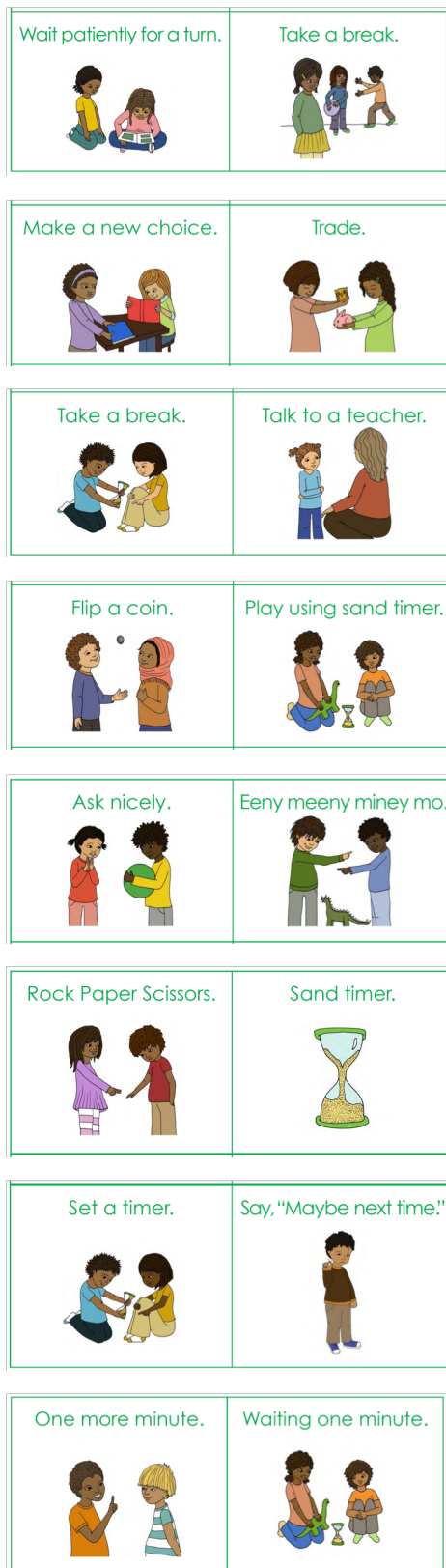
- **Step 5: Reinforce Problem Solving**

Remember to reinforce your child for trying to problem solve the situation instead of having a meltdown or hitting. Problem solving is hard and if we want your child to keep practicing, we have to make it rewarding for them. You could use a sticker chart, edibles, or access to fun activities as a reward for problem solving!

Daily Challenge

Try and anticipate one situation today where your child may become stuck and upset and need help practicing problem solving. Help practice coming up with multiple solutions!

Problem Solving Solutions Cards



Books/Songs to Teach the Concept of Problem Solving

- Sing the song while reading the book *We're going on a Bear Hunt*
- Any of the *Curious George* books teach children about how to get out of dilemmas.
- *Prudy's Problem and How She Solved It* by Carey Armstrong-Ellis.
- *Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear* by Audrey Wood

Ways to Teach Flexible Thinking

- Play a game where you have to try and get from one side of the room to the other without touching the ground
- Play the game "How Many Ways?"
 - Work with your child to figure out different ways to walk from the door to the table, carry water, close the door, or fold a piece of paper.
- Play the game "What can you do with...?"
 - Show your child different objects around the house and come up with different things you can do with them (e.g. spoon, paper, a toy car, diaper).

Things to Say to Promote Flexible Thinking

- What else can we do?
- What happens next?
- We can do this another way too!
- I wonder what would happen if we tried another way?
- Let's see what else we can do!

PARENTING CLASSES!

Avoiding Temper Tantrums!

Tips to Parenting Preschoolers!

ADULTS ONLY / NO CHILDREN PLEASE!

DATE FOR ALL CLASSES: Thursday January 30th, 2020

LOCATION FOR ALL CLASSES: Kauri Sue Hamilton School –

Child Development Center - 2827 West 13400 South Riverton, Utah

Class: Avoiding Temper Tantrums

Time: 9:45 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. OR 12:45 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Class: Tips To Parenting Preschoolers

Time: 11:15 a.m.

RSVP: Please register for the class by email or phone:

Email: Rachelle.blair@jordandistrict.org

Phone: (801) 567-8510

Resources provided by:

Reaching IN...Reaching OUT
The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning
Your Therapy Source, Inc