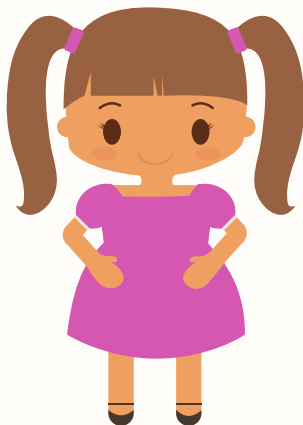


How to teach Problem-Solving skills to children

by Big Life Journal

As parents, we can't always be there to solve every problem for children. In fact, this isn't our job. Our job is to TEACH children how to solve problems by themselves. This way, they can become confident, independent, and successful individuals. Instead of giving up or getting frustrated when they encounter a challenge, children with problem-solving skills manage their emotions, think creatively, and persist until they find a solution. Naturally, these abilities go hand-in-hand with a growth mindset.

How to teach problem-solving skills to children according to their age



3-5 YEARS

- Use **emotion coaching**:
 - Step 1: Name & validate emotions.
 - Step 2: Let them process emotions.
 - Step 3: Problem-solving.
- Say, "**Show me the hard part.**"
- Problem-solve with **storybooks** (use the "dialogue-reading" technique).
- Problem-solve with **creative play**.

5-7 YEARS

- Teach the problem-solving **steps**:
 - Step 1: What am I feeling?
 - Step 2: What's the problem?
 - Step 3: What are solutions?
 - Step 4: What would happen if...?
 - Step 5: Which one will I try?
- Problem-solve with **craft materials**.
- Ask **open-ended questions**: "How could we work together to solve this?", "What do you think will happen next?"



7-9 YEARS

- **Break down** problems into chunks
 - brainstorm together
 - ask open-ended questions
 - LISTEN
- Show "**The broken escalator**" video + have a discussion.

9-11 YEARS

- Use **creative** problem-solving with **prompts** (create a jump ramp for cars, design your own game with rules).
- Make them **work** for it (ask HOW they can earn the money to get what they want).
- Encourage them to put it on **paper** (problem-solving graphic organizers).



12+ YEARS

- **Play chess** together. Players use critical thinking, creativity, analysis of the board, and more.
- Have them learn to **code**. It promotes creativity, logic, planning and persistence.
- Encourage to start a meaningful **project**.
- Apply the **SODAS** method. This method can be used for big or small problems.
- Encourage to **join** problem-solving **groups**:
 - Odyssey of the Mind,
 - Model U.N.,
 - Debate team,
 - Science Olympiad, and others!



Everybody needs to solve problems every day. But we're not born with the skills we need to do this – we have to develop them.

When solving problems, it's good to be able to:

- Listen and think calmly.
- Consider options and respect other people's opinions and needs.
- Find constructive solutions, and sometimes work towards compromises.

This is the SODAS method:

| | |
|----------|--|
| S | Situation Reflect on the SITUATION and establish the who, what, where, when and why involved. |
| O | Options Consider your OPTIONS or choices, and make a list of both good and bad ones. |
| D | Disadvantages Determine the DISADVANTAGES for every option. |
| A | Advantages Work out the ADVANTAGES for every option. |
| S | Solution Summarize all of your options and conclude which SOLUTION will work best. |