

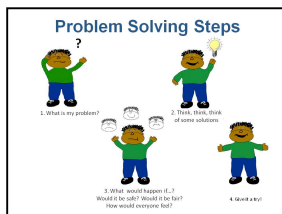
Strategies for Helping Children Learn to Manage Their Own Behavior

Self-management helps older preschool children learn to pay attention to their own behavior while letting them know what is expected of them. Every classroom teacher wants children to use appropriate play and social interaction skills to participate in classroom routines, complete tasks, and engage in instructional activities. Using self-managing techniques children become responsible for their actions and learn to monitor their own behavior. Here are some examples of the techniques you can use to facilitate self-management in your classroom.

Visual Supports: In your classroom pay close attention to the children and assess each child's level of self-management skills. What do they need help with? What steps are they missing? Two examples of using this technique in your classroom are helping children learn the steps required for hand-washing or for getting ready for nap. Review the steps to make sure the children understand what is expected. Make sure the steps are described clearly and displayed visually. Effective praise from you will also encourage more independence and appropriate behavior. As time goes on, the children will require less assistance from you and be able to complete the task easily while managing their own behavior.



Problem-Solving Steps: We want children in our classrooms to learn to solve their problems, which includes thinking of various solutions and learning that solutions have consequences. There are four basic problem-solving steps for young children to learn.

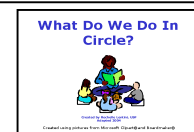


- What is my problem?** How do I feel about it? - *I'm sad that Hortense won't let me have the wagon.*
- What is a possible solution?** - *We could set a timer and take turns.*
- What might happen?** Is it safe? Is it fair? How will everyone feel?- *I would be happy to wait but Hortense might not want to share.*
- Give it a try!** – Did it work? If so, great! If not go back to the second step and try another solution...perhaps you could play together.

For this technique to be effective you should spend time coaching children about different possible solutions to common problems (take turns, trade, set a timer, etc.) or use the Solution Kit Cards found at <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>

Center Choice Strategy: Choices allow children to begin to feel in charge of their own behavior. Using the Center Choice Strategy allows children to have options for activities – where to go and what to do. Each child places his/her name or picture in the center where he/she wants to play. The centers should have a predetermined number of children permitted in the center. That number will reflect the maximum number of children allowed based on space and materials for productive play. This strategy allows children to choose a center they enjoy and provides an opportunity for critical thinking or problem-solving if a center's spaces are filled.

Scripted Stories: Scripted stories are stories specifically written to provide a set of expectations for social rules. When scripted stories are used, they teach new skills by providing the child the "script" for using a new skill. When children are given information that helps them understand the expectation and perceptions of others, problems can be reduced or minimized. Scripted stories are available at <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>



Book Nooks: Teachers can also use books to help children learn to manage their own behaviors. CSEFEL has created easy-to-use guides called Book Nooks, to provide ways to embed social and emotional skill-building activities through literature into everyday routines. Some books that help children learn to manage their own behavior include:

- *Talk and Work it Out*, by Cheri Meiners
- *No Biting*, by Karen Katz

Compiled by *Promoting Healthy Social Behaviors in Child Care Centers*, 2011
Additional strategies can be found at <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>