
Working with Families to Support Children's Problem Solving with Peers

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INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the article "Talking with Parents about Problems" by Carol Davis from the Center for Responsive Schools. 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

- ◆ Identify best practices for talking with families about problems in the classroom.
- ◆ Consider family perspectives when discussing children's problem solving with peers.
- ◆ Plan for positive interactions with families, using language that stimulates conversation.

Activity

- ◆ Read the article.
- ◆ Use the questions below to reflect on how you can best support families in your classroom to promote children's problem solving with peers.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support children's social problem solving.

When teachers actively communicate with students' parents, children do better, both socially and academically.

Carol Davis, Center for Responsive Schools

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention in the article? What made that fact, idea, or example meaningful to you?
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- ◆ In the beginning, the author reflects on an experience with her own child who was having challenges with peers. Think about a past social problem that may have occurred with your own child or a child you are familiar with (e.g., a friend's or family member's child).
 - How did the situation make you (or the family member of that child) feel?
 - Was there an opportunity to discuss what happened with the child's teacher? If so, what worked best when having those conversations? What didn't work?
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- ◆ Every family has their own perspective and approach when supporting their child to solve problems with others. This may differ from the approach taken in the classroom or program.
 - Why is it important to understand a family's perspective about problem solving with others?
 - How can you learn more about how families support children to solve problems with others?
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- ◆ In this article, Carol Davis lists multiple strategies to use when talking with families. Read through the strategies listed and think about any of the them that you have used.
 - What worked well? What would you have done differently?
 - Are there any additional successful strategies that you would add to this list?
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- ◆ Young children are just beginning to learn how to get along with others and they need our help to resolve disagreements. Many factors play into their development of these skills including their background, culture, and temperament type. Think about the children in your classroom:
 - Are there families that you contact more often about their child's interactions with others?
 - What do you know about that family's values and beliefs about problem solving?
 - Reflecting on your own beliefs about problem solving, is there a misalignment or difference in how you view problem solving compared to the family?
 - How can you further engage with the family's culture, language, and beliefs to support children's social problem solving?
 - Take a moment to think specifically about past or current families of dual language learners in your classroom or program. How can you prepare to have positive conversations and to make sure the families feel heard and supported?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about working with families to promote social problem-solving skills:

- ◆ **Source:** National Center on Parent, Family, and Community Engagement
- ◆ **Guide:** Strategies for Family Engagement: Attitudes and Practices
- ◆ **Link:** https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/public/strategies_for_fe_attitudes_practices_final_508.pdf
- ◆ **Description:** Communicating with families when their children need extra support to solve problems with others can feel challenging, especially if you do not have a strong relationship with that family. In this guide, educators can learn strategies for connecting with families using a strengths-based approach. The examples included support educators to use relationship-based practices to build trusting partnerships with families.



- ◆ **Source:** PBS Kids for Parents
- ◆ **Website:** Social Problem Solving
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow/age-2/social-skills/social-problem-solving>
- ◆ **Description:** This webpage from PBS Kids provides family resources for helping young children work through social conflict. Educators can share this resource with families as they work together to promote problem-solving skills.