

# Problem Solving

## What is it?

Learning how to find a solution to a difficult or complex issue

## Why is it important?

Problem solving is a critical thinking skill that children must learn. This will help them be successful now, in school and later in life

## How can you help children improve problem solving skills?

- Provide support for reaching goals (ex: if infant is trying to roll over, encourage her to go as far as she can then bring toy close so she can explore it)
- Model problem solving - children learn best through imitation
- Problem solve **WITH** them not **FOR** them
  - you can facilitate conversation but do not put words in their mouth - kids need to practice saying things to peers if conflict arises

## Activities to do

- Play disappear/reappear games (hide and seek, peek a boo, hiding objects & having kids find them)
- Encourage kids to explore new objects (touch, bang, shake, roll)
- Tell kids what they're doing ("You got the truck to move by pulling the string!")
- Puzzles & memory games
- Imaginative Play

## How it relates to social emotional learning

- When children feel successful, they also feel confident and proud, therefore leading them to explore more
- Establishes competence and self-esteem

## References

Zero to Three Early Connections Last a Lifetime. (n.d). *Supporting Thinking Skills from 0-12 Months*. Zero to Three.  
<https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/supporting-thinking-skills-from-0-12-months/>

Gloeckler, L., & Cassell, J. (2012). Teacher Practices with Toddlers During Social Problem Solving Opportunities. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 40, 251–257. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-011-0495-4>