

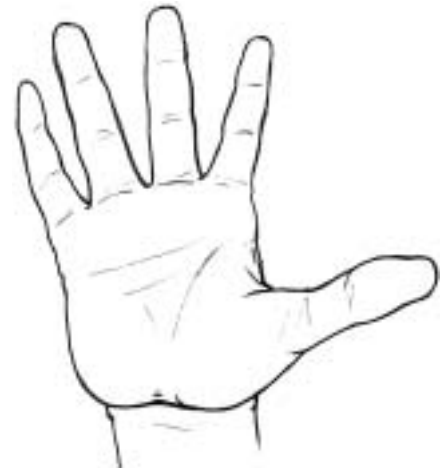
Steps in Social Problem Solving for Young Children

ACT AGAINST VIOLENCE TRAINING PROGRAM

<http://www.ActAgainstViolence.org>

SOCIAL PROBLEM SOLVING- HANDOUT 1

Teachers can teach young children social problem-solving skills following the IDEAL model described below. Remember that children under 3 years may not be developmentally ready for this model.



I—Identify or determine the problem.

- Think about the types of problems that the children you teach have with other children: Identify real problems or create hypothetical ones. Ask the children to define the problem.
- Use teachable moments as opportunities to develop vocabulary and model thinking, like saying: "Children stop. Listen. We have a problem. Two children both want to use the red paint at the same time."

D—Determine possible solutions.

- After defining the problem, ask the children to come up with ideas for solutions.
- For the paint sharing-scenario, children might propose the following solutions: (a) fight; (b) teacher decides who goes first; (c) time children on the clock, each getting one minute; (d) take the paint away; (e) ask the children to choose a fair solution.
- These proposed choices provide an opportunity to teach about feelings, alternatives to aggression for solving problems, what makes a "good" choice (fair, safe, makes me feel proud), empathy, and taking different perspectives.

Evaluate the possible consequences and determine the best solution.

- After brainstorming possible solutions, the teacher needs to guide the children to think about the consequences of each one. What would happen to the aggressor (fighter), the victim (child who got beat up) of the aggression, and the witnesses (classmates who watched the fight)? What feelings does each person have? Then help the children decide the best solution for the paint-sharing scenario.

A—Act to implement the plan of action.

- It is more difficult to use problem solving in the middle of a conflict than in a hypothetical situation.
- If problem solving during a conflict, teachers need to calm the child down first and then go back to step 1.
- If the model is used in a hypothetical situation, children will probably be able to think of ideas more quickly.

L—Learn from the experience.

- Check with the children to see if the problem has been solved. Recognize success or give support or help in finding another solution.