Problem Solving in the Real World

NCPMI

Step	Teacher's Role	Example Language
Setting the tone	Support emotion regulation or validate emotions	• "I see you tucking in your shell." • "You're taking big deep breaths to calm down." • "You look disappointed." • "You look sad. I see you are crying."
1. What's the problem?	Validate child(ren)'s expressions in neutral language	• "It sounds like you both want the scoop." • "You want to play with Jake, and he's playing with Emma." • "You are having some trouble zipping your coat."
2. Think, think, think of some solutions.	Encourage child(ren) to brainstorm solutions or find solutions from the solution kit	• "Hmm...what could we do to solve this problem?" • "Where can we find more ideas for solutions?" • "What if we got a timer?" • "We could ask nicely or find a new place to play. Which would you like to try?"
3. What would happen if we tried each solution? Would it be safe? Would it be fair? How would everyone feel?	Support child(ren) to evaluate solutions. In the beginning, the teacher may provide this evaluation for the child. Not all evaluative questions must be addressed in every situation.	• "You said we could 'play together.' What would that look like?" • "How long should we set the timer for? What would be fair?" • "Asking for help is a great idea." • "Taking turns going down the slide is a safe solution."
4. Give the solution a try!	Encourage child(ren) to put that solution into action; ensure successful outcome for child who is still learning the process	• "You chose to play in a new center. Let's find somewhere fun to play." • "Let's go share. You can keep one and give one to him." • "You chose 'ask nicely.' You can say, 'can I put on a block?'" • "You did all the problem-solving steps. Now you can take a turn."
Follow-up support	Follow-up with child(ren)	• "You solved the problem. You are taking turns with the scoop." • "You are good problem solvers. You figured out we can get another chair, and now we're ready for small groups." • "It looks like we still have a problem. Angelique still doesn't have a buddy. What should we do?

Pyramid Model — Preschool