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

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 this article, Carol Davis lists multiple strategies to use when talking with parents. Read through the strategies listed and think about any of the them that you have used.
  o What worked well? What would you have done differently?
  o Are there any additional successful strategies that you would add to this list?

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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).
  o How did the situation make you (or the family member of that child) feel?
  o 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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♦ Young children are just beginning to learn how to get along with others and 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:
  o Are there families that you contact more often about conflicts with peers?
  o What do you know about that family's values and beliefs about problem solving?
  o Reflecting on your own beliefs about problem solving, is there a misalignment or difference in how you view problem solving compared to the family?
  o How can you further engage with the family's culture, language, and beliefs to support children's social problem solving?
  o 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:** Public Broadcasting Service (PBS)
- ♦ **Webpage:** Social Problem Solving: Helping Your Four-Year-Old Work Through Social Conflicts
- ♦ **Link:** https://www.pbs.org/parents/learn-grow/age-4/social-skills/social-problem-solving
- ♦ **Description:** This webpage from PBS Kids provides family resources for helping children to address social conflict. Teachers can share this resource with families as they work together to promote problem-solving skills.

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- ♦ **Source:** Illinois Early Learning Project
- ♦ **Video and Article:** "She Goes First": Cooperative "Housekeeping" Play
- ♦ **Link:** https://illinoisearlylearning.org/videos/videos-benchmark/negotiating/
- ♦ **Description:** The video included in this resource shows a bilingual preschool classroom with children involved in cooperative play. This type of play is important for children to learn how to get along with others, share, take turns, etc. The accompanying article reviews the importance of cooperative play and the related childcare teaching and development standards. Teachers can reference the standards as part of reflecting on their own practice. They can also share the video and main ideas with families as they engage to support children's social development.

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- ♦ **Source:** Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center
- ♦ **Module:** Problem Solving in the Moment
- ♦ **Link:** https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/problem-solving-moment
- ♦ **Description:** In this training module, teachers can learn how to help children resolve social problems as they arise in the classroom. Supporting materials are included for additional advice, such as "Tips for Teachers: Dual Language Learners." Also provided is a "Tips for Families" handout, which can be shared with families to continue working on resolving social conflicts at home.

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- ♦ **Source:** National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)
- ♦ **Handout:** Solution Kit: Home Edition
- ♦ **Link:** https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Solution_kit_cards_home.pdf
- ♦ **Description:** In this handout, teachers can connect with families as they build on classroom lessons around problem solving. Families can use the solution kit at home as children practice resolving challenging social situations with others.