

How to make and implement a solution board

Young children are just learning the skills of successful social interactions with peers. It is inevitable that young children will experience conflict with one another as they are learning how to play together, and be successful in group care. Young children benefit greatly from coaching and guidance from care giving adults who can help provide them with the words to use during conflicts. When adults actively teach children ways to solve problems with increasing independence; children gain confidence, build self-control, and have more successful interactions with peers. By using social emotional visuals and language that focuses on identifying and solving problems, children gain the skills they need to successfully resolve conflicts with peers. A solution board is one tool that can be used when teaching young children problem solving skills.

Introduce the solution board to all children during a regular group lesson time. Teachers can explain that sometimes children and their friends will want to do the same thing at the same time, and that can be a “problem”. They can explain that when there is a problem, children can say, “I have a problem”, begin to identify the problem, and then begin to think of a solution. Introducing the solution board before children will need to use it, and practicing how to use it, helps children become familiar with the tool which will allow them to use it with better results when a true problem occurs.

Use solution focused language in the classroom when there is a problem between children. Guide children through the following components of problem solving: 1) What is the problem? 2) How do you feel? 3) What is a solution? 4) Give the solution a try. Be prepared that children will need assistance from adults to come up with potential solutions. The solution board can be used as a visual aid to help children who may not be able to verbalize or identify realistic solution options. Having a solution board accessible to children at all times will allow children to begin to use the tool with increasing independence.

On the solution board shown below, Velcro was used to stick the solution cards to the board. This allows children who need a concrete visual reminder to hold on to the solution they choose. It also allows the teacher to customize the solutions to the problem before offering the solution board to children. For example, if one solution is not possible, or the number of solutions is overwhelming to the specific child using the tool, they can be taken off the board. A blank square may also be included in case the teacher (or children) would like to create a custom solution for the situation.

Making a Solution Board

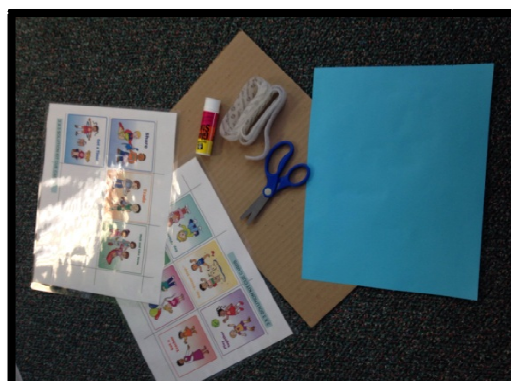
Materials:

Use this website to print out the solution squares <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>

Two pieces of laminate paper

Scissors

Velcro



Medium piece of cardboard

Color paper

Marker

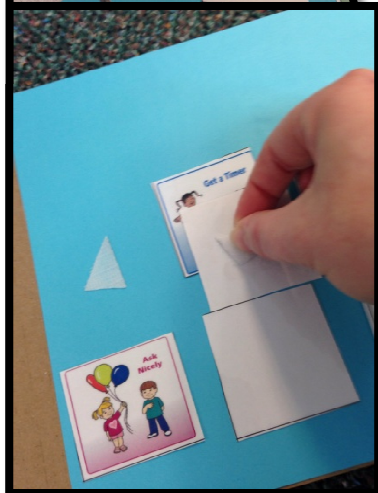
Glue

Steps:

- 1) Laminate solution squares
- 2) Cut out solution squares you would like to use

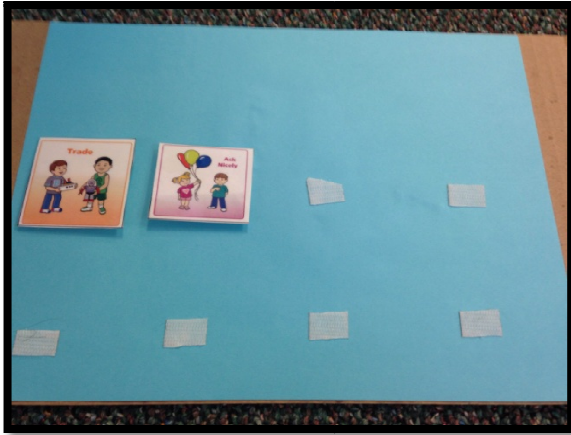


- 3) Glue down color paper to cardboard
- 4) Lay out squares to fit paper and cut out Velcro pieces to go on the back of the squares

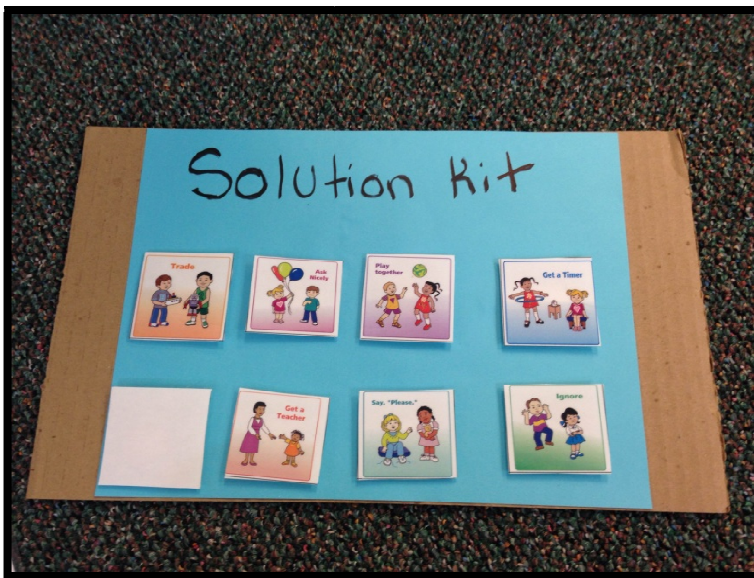


- 5) Attach Velcro to squares and board

6) Attach solution squares to board



7) Name the board. In this case we named it the "Solution Kit", you can name it whatever you would like.



Additional social-emotional resources and the link provided above can be found on the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning's website (<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>)