



~Helping Kids Problem Solve~

1. Helping a child problem solve, may first involve not getting involved. Allowing children some time to figure out problems themselves can be all that is needed. Second, it may just be a matter of asking a simple question of “What do you need?”.
2. Adults can help children learn about the consequences of their behavior or choices by helping the children reflect on the relationship between their behavior and/or choices and the learning environment with which they have some agreements. Again, asking a question, such as “How is what you are choosing to do effecting your learning right now or the learning of your classmates?”.
3. When problems arise between students, the process becomes more time intensive but crucial to learning. It might be helpful to find a private space. Also, having the involved students agree to listen to each other is key to finding a solution. Let them know that they will each have a chance to say how they feel and what they need and/or make a request. It is also helpful to have them agree that they cannot interrupt each other during this process. You can restate the problem or have each student summarize what the other student is saying before commenting. at this point, asking for possible solutions is appropriate, and then agreeing to have the students revisit how well their solution is working for them.
4. Occasionally problems involve more than just a few students and often affect the entire classroom. If coopers notice these kinds of problems, it is appropriate to it up with the teacher and request that the problem be discussed in circle. Using language such as “I am noticing that when, kids do ...(not naming ames and not characterizing behavior), and this interferes with....”
5. Revisiting the classroom agreements can also be a guide to conflict resolution. It is often effective to remind ourselves and the students about the agreements we have made or the expectations we have set forth. If you do not know the agreements for your classroom, ask a student to show you or tell you.
6. More helpful hints in problem solving:
 - Observe without evaluating
 - Identify and express feelings
 - Make your requests based on your needs
 - Be present to the needs of others “Don’t just do something, Stand there!”
7. Finally, by utilizing language set forth in Nonviolent Communication (i.e. making requests vs. demands), we can facilitate conflict resolution among kids and adults.