# Peaceful Problem-Solving

A supportive resource from the Hawai‘i Association of School Psychologists (HASP)

Problems are a central part of human life. We all face problems every day that need solving. The ability to discover a problem, explore solutions, take initiative, and learn from successes and failures is invaluable. Problem-solving is a mental process that can be improved with practice. An effective approach can be applied not only to our own challenges, but to the challenges of our communities and even the world. Empower keiki this week with these daily problem-solving activities.

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## MONDAY

Have a safe and relaxing Memorial Day! As you enjoy the holiday with your family, take time to notice how keiki problem-solve throughout the day. Do they observe and listen before acting? What strategies do they use during play, such as while completing a puzzle? How do they get their needs met, for example, to get an object that is out of reach? Do they think creatively and persist when things get difficult? Are they willing to make mistakes? Do they recognize when an approach is not working and try something else? How do they collaborate with others? Use the following link for more information on how problem-solving skills progress throughout the early years.


## TUESDAY

Creative play is one way keiki develop problem-solving skills. It encourages critical thinking, which is an important component of problem-solving. Plus, most keiki enjoy creative play, and it can help boost self-esteem!

Activity: Engage keiki in one (or more) of the creative play activities listed in the Resources section.

## WEDNESDAY

Roadblocks are unavoidable in daily life. They are also natural opportunities to develop problem-solving skills and to learn from successes and failures.

Activity: Allow keiki to work through roadblocks today. Is their toy lost or their favorite snack out of reach? Support their problem-solving but resist the urge to solve it for them!

## THURSDAY

Growth mindset is the belief that abilities can be developed through persistence and hard work. It promotes a love of learning, builds resilience, and supports emotional well-being!

Activity: Show keiki how to shift their internal voice from negative to positive. For example, shift "I'm not good at math," to, "I'm learning math, and if I keep at it, I will get better. Just like when I learned how to surf!" Empower keiki by teaching them to change the language they use and to link current challenges to past successes.
**FRIDAY**

We sometimes forget that working through challenges and making mistakes promote learning. It can be difficult to watch keiki struggle, and we often want to reduce any frustration it causes them. However, solving problems for keiki may have a negative impact. It removes the opportunity for them to problem-solve, learn, and build confidence. Find balance! Support keiki emotionally while allowing them to struggle through challenges.

Activity: Notice your own behavior today. Do you have the tendency to swoop in and save the day at any sign of struggle? Or, do you allow keiki to work through struggles while offering support? Consider changing your approach to encourage problem-solving skills and build confidence in keiki.

**WEEKEND FAMILY ACTIVITIES**

Do one (or more) of the group problem-solving activities in the Resources section. Try creating a wool web, having a scavenger hunt, or building a tower.

Effective problem-solving skills are critical to career success. Discuss this as a family. What types of problems would occur in various jobs and what are some creative solutions? Share your own experiences!

Randomly pick difficult scenarios and ask each other "what would you do if...". Have a discussion around possible solutions.

Create a solution chain from a presented problem. Write a problem on a slip of paper and have each family member write their own solution to the problem and attach them all into a chain. This helps encourage keiki to explore a variety of possible solutions.

Limit exposure to the news and other possible sources of negative influence.

Have open and honest discussions. Answer any questions keiki may have while encouraging their sense of safety and security.

Allow alone time, if possible, and facilitate opportunities for self-reflection.

**PROBLEM-SOLVING RESOURCES**


Creativity and Play: [https://www.pbs.org/wholechild/providers/play.html](https://www.pbs.org/wholechild/providers/play.html)


Group Activities: [https://icebreakerideash.com/problem-solving-activities/](https://icebreakerideash.com/problem-solving-activities/)