# Problem Solving in the Early Years





Begin to explore cause & effect

Interact with my world through observation and imitation

Explore the world through my senses



Experiment with objects to learn about them

Work things out through repetition

Use my memory of previous interactions to help me solve problems



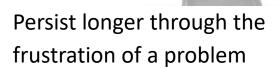
Think of solutions to the problems I experience

Begin working cooperatively with others to solve problems

Start to reflect on my use of problem-solving strategies







Begin to think about problems I haven't directly experienced (abstract thinking)

Reflect more critically on others' problems, even if they're not my own

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# Nurturing Problem Solving in Young Children



### Infant

- Delight in my discoveries!
  Everything is new to me!
- Show me how to play with different objects
- Offer me new things to explore;
  place them within my reach
- Let me explore using all my senses
- Narrate my actions
- Spend time in serve and return interactions that encourage imitation

#### Toddler

- Offer materials with moving parts
- Show me how, then let me try
- Let me try to figure out how to do things before offering help.
- Allow me the opportunity to use repetition to figure things out.
- Show me how to communicate when I have a problem. (e.g.?)
- Ask me open ended questions; wait for my response.
- Support peer interactions by staying close; help me to share and take turns

### Preschool/ Kindergarten

- Use visuals to help me remember how to problem solve and find solutions
- Create intentional opportunities to practice problem solving with peers (e.g. collaborative materials)
- Encourage me to think of solutions before offering suggestions
- Notice my problem-solving with positive descriptive feedback
- Help me reflect on my use of problem-solving
- Model and narrate your own use of problem-solving