

I HAD IT FIRST!

Leona Pannabecker, LMSW
Child-Parent Centers, Inc.
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OBJECTIVES

- Explore the links between self regulation, brain development, and collaborative problem solving
- Explore the role of Teacher as Mediator/Problem Solving Coach
- Practice the Problem-Solving Approach and plan how to apply it in your work

REFLECTION

- What comes to mind when you hear the terms “Guidance and Discipline?”
- When are you most likely to collaborate with children? With families?
- When is collaboration harder?
- What helps collaboration be more successful?
- What does it mean to you to be a Coach?

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT – PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX

Prefrontal Cortex – Houses the thinking, creating, analyzing, learning, and problem solving systems of the brain

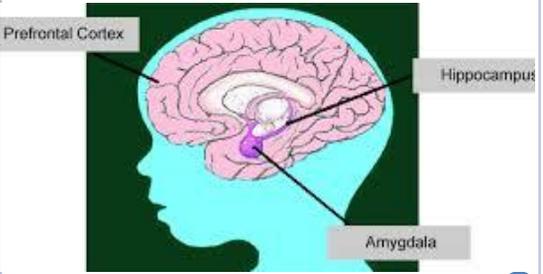
- When do you feel the most creative and focused?
- What do you do when you can't focus?

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT – LIMBIC SYSTEM

Limbic System – Houses the Emotions and the Alarm System. When highly activated, this system will trigger a Fight/Flight/Freeze response.

- Think of a time when you simply needed to react quickly (danger, anger, compassion)... what was going on? What happened in your body? What did you need in that moment to calm?
- Example – Fire alarm

BRAIN SYSTEMS



The diagram shows a sagittal cross-section of the human brain. Three specific regions are highlighted with lines pointing to labels: the Prefrontal Cortex at the front, the Amygdala in the center, and the Hippocampus in the back.

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- The Whole Brain Child by Daniel J. Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson © 2011
- Model of the brain as a house.
 - Lower Level – Basic functions, including Limbic System (eat, sleep, bathroom, alarm...)
 - Upper Level – Learning space, including Pre-Frontal Cortex (ready for games, puzzles, homework, creative projects, planning...)

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- For young children, the upstairs is still in development!
- The “staircase” can get blocked, so that children get stuck “downstairs” more easily
- In a “downstairs” moment, we (including children) are not ready or able to learn. We are simply reacting
- It is imperative to regain access to the “upstairs”

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Regain Access

- Notice where *you* are in the moment – are you using your upstairs brain or your downstairs brain?
- If your downstairs brain is activated, how do *you* climb the staircase and engage your upstairs brain?
- In your Team, discuss how you calm yourself in the moment – how do you construct a “Quick Patch?”

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Regain Access – Calm the body, calm the mind

- Connect through body language, tone of voice, acknowledgment of the situation and feelings that go with it
- Practice Calming using deep breaths, counting, gentle motion or touch
- Clear the staircase – get children talking. Ask about what happened, help them describe what the problem is
- Engage the upstairs brain – ask about solutions.

REFLECTION

Think back to your childhood, and a situation where you had a tough interaction with another child, and an adult intervened...

- What did the adult do that was helpful?
- Did anything happen that was not helpful?
- What did you learn from this encounter?

UPSTAIRS/DOWNSTAIRS

With your Learning Team, read the scenario.

- Notice – where are you when you read this? Upstairs, downstairs, a little of both?
- How do you take on the role of Coach?
- Where is this child?
- If this child is “downstairs,” how do you help him/her to move “upstairs?”
- If this child is already “upstairs,” what would be your next steps?

SHIFTING THE LENS

- Misbehavior vs. Mistaken Behavior
 - Image of the Child
 - All Behavior is Communication – what is this child trying to communicate?
 - A mistake in any other learning domain signals a need for support and includes the child in increasing capacity.
- Frame of Mind
 - What should I do when one child hits another? vs
 - This child just hit another child... what does each child need from me?

Problem Solving Steps



PROBLEM SOLVING REFLECTION

- Consider what we just learned about brain development. Consider, with your Team...
- Why do these steps follow this order?
- What role do steps 1 and 2 play in supporting brain development?
- What role do the other steps play in supporting brain development?
- Reference: You Can't Come to My Birthday Party! By Betsy Evans, © 2002

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS 1 AND 2

- Focus: Calming the alarms, re-establishing access to the upstairs brain (or at least the staircase), supporting and modeling self-regulation.
- **Approach Calmly, Stopping any Hurtful Actions**
- **Acknowledge Feelings**

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS 3 AND 4

- Focus on Climbing the staircase, opening the door to the upstairs
- **Gather Information**
- **Restate the Problem**
- **Repeat as needed until all agree on what the problem is!**

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS 3 AND 4

Traps to Avoid...

- "Who had it first?"
- Body Language and Tone of Voice – do they convey connection and neutrality?
- Moving on to final steps before agreement is reached about the problem

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS 5 AND 6

- Working upstairs – engage creativity and problem solving for solutions
- **Ask for Ideas for Solutions**
- **Support Implementation of the Solution/Agreement**
 - Stay nearby until it's clear that both agree to their parts of the proposed solution
 - If the proposed solution has some glitches, go back down the steps as far as you need to re-engage the upstairs brain to resolve glitches

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS 5 AND 6

Tips for Successful Solutions

- Restate the solution and ensure agreement from all parties, just like you did with the problem.
- Acknowledge the work! Use specific, genuine feedback to encourage children.
 - For example: "You both wanted to use this at the same time, and were so upset. Then you calmed down and figured out a way to take turns! You solved this problem!"

PROBLEM SOLVING STEPS 5 AND 6

Tips for Successful Solutions

- Help children clarify specifics/logistics.
 - For example, if a time limit is agreed upon, who will be the timekeeper?
 - If a time limit is agreed upon, will it work within the classroom schedule?
 - Balance – Remember to pause after asking for ideas, especially if this is new... and know that you may need to offer some prompts to get the process started

REFLECTION: BUILDING COMMUNITY

- What did you notice about your approach?
- What did your partners do that helped you as a team come to a resolution?
- What will *you* need to keep in mind when using this approach?
- How does this approach apply to all ages? To larger groups?
- How does this connect to other community-building strategies?

CLOSING

- Final Thoughts and Plans
- Write down one or two things you will change based on what you learned and practiced today
- How will you know when that change is successful?
- Thank You for your Participation and Ideas!

CONTACT ME

Please contact me with questions, wonderings, successes, or challenges!

Lpannabecker@childparentcenters.org