

# Workplace Readiness Skill

## Personal Qualities and Abilities

### Activity Sheet

## Skill 3

## Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

We encounter a number of problems throughout our daily lives, particularly in work settings. Some problems are big and some are small. Employees are often asked to solve simple and complex problems. Being able to think critically and solving problems is a skill needed for success in the workplace.

### Description of Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

Being a critical thinker and a problem solver means when you have a problem, you work to solve the problem. You think of and evaluate potential solutions, and take action to solve the issue.

Examples of showing critical thinking and problem-solving:

- You are doing laundry for the first time on your own and not sure if you are doing it right. Instead of giving up, you do an internet search on how to do laundry or ask a family member for help.
- You overslept and missed your ride to work. Instead of calling your supervisor to say you can't come to work, you call to say you will be late. You then schedule an Uber to get to work.

### Menu of Activities

These activities are designed to help families discuss and practice critical thinking and problem-solving. Choose one or more activities to complete with your child.

#### Activity 1: Four Steps of Problem-Solving

1. Watch [Soft Skills: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving](https://youtu.be/hPil44XEKgs) (youtu.be/hPil44XEKgs) with your child.
  2. Discuss what the problem was in the video and how the employee solved the problem.
  3. Go over the following 4 steps to problem-solving (it is helpful if you can write out or draw a picture of each step):
    - a) Identify the problem.
    - b) Think about ways to solve the problem.
    - c) Evaluate each solution and pick the best one.
    - d) Put your solution in action and evaluate to make sure it worked.
  4. Practice the 4 steps of problem-solving by watching the video [Stuck on an Escalator](https://youtu.be/YQUAs3syuJE) (youtu.be/YQUAs3syuJE).
  5. After viewing the video, go through the 4 steps to talk about how they could have solved this problem.
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## Activity 2: Solving Problems Around the House

1. Throughout the week, use situations that naturally occur or create problems for your child to practice problem-solving.

For example:

- The TV won't turn on (you unplugged it).
- They cannot find the bread to make a sandwich (you hid it).
- Your child cannot find their shoes.

2. Give time to see if your child will solve the problem on their own.
3. If they cannot solve the problem, go through the 4 steps (mentioned in Activity 1) of problem-solving together.

## Activity 3: Recognizing the Problem

The first step in solving a problem is recognizing that there is a problem. Use this activity to help your child start recognizing when there is a problem.

1. Collect pictures that show problems. You can use pictures from the internet, magazines, books, or ones you draw. If pictures are not available, you can just act out several problems.
2. Show the picture to your child and ask, "Is there a problem happening in the picture?"
3. Next ask, "what is the problem?" If your child is not at the point they can tell you the problem, that is fine! Just discuss what the problem is together.

## Reflection

Review the questions with your child and respond together after completing the activities.

- Did this information help your family better understand critical thinking and problem-solving?
- What was easy or hard about learning and practicing this skill?
- Why is this skill important to use at home and at work?
- How do we continue to practice this skill in the home and in the community?
- What additional information or resources do I need to continue to practice this skill with my child?