

# Simple Problem-Solving Activities for Children

Children learn so much through their everyday play – many life lessons, too... While it sometimes feels easiest for us as parents to rush in when our children are challenged, allowing them to solve things for themselves can build their problem-solving skills. Setting up opportunities to learn problem-solving through play can be very beneficial as well. A few ideas/activities might include:

- If they are safe, pause before stepping in when your child is trying to get a book off of the shelf that they might be able to reach with their footstool.
- Make it Move – put a ball of crumpled paper between two lines (pieces of masking tape you stuck down, two pencils, or lines in your flooring) and ask your child to move the ball of paper – without touching it. Stretch their problem-solving muscles, give hints as needed as you don't want them to feel defeated.
- Skyscraper – hold a contest seeing who can build the tallest skyscraper using blocks, Legos, or other building toys. Make the challenge that the skyscraper has to stand independently so children can think before they begin on how to do so.
- Find the Music – hide a music player (phone, tablet, etc.) that is playing music under a blanket or behind a piece of furniture while your child is not looking and ask them to find it. Continue hiding the music in different places and show excitement to encourage repetition.
- Lid Match Up – rinse out and dry used bottles and lids from a variety of containers (water bottles, juice bottles, soda bottles) that are different sizes and colors and mix them up and encourage your child to figure out which lid goes on each of the bottles.



References: Simple Problem-Solving Activities: Burnett, J. (n.d.). *8 Problem Solving Games to Play With Your Preschooler*. The Atlas Mission. <https://www.atlasmission.com/blog/8-problem-solving-games-play-preschooler/>; Elliot, L.K., & Flanagan, K. (2015). *Growing Great Kids® Parenting, Attachment, Child Development & Family Strengthening Curriculum* (all volumes). GKI®. Perles, K. (2019, July 30). *8 Pre-K games to teach problem-solving skills*. Care.com. <https://www.care.com/c/stories/4109/8-pre-k-games-to-teach-problem-solving-skills/>