

PROBLEM SOLVING

What is this developmental skill?

Problem solving is the ability to identify a challenge, think of possible solutions, and choose an effective course of action. It helps children become increasingly independent and resilient.

How does this normally develop?

Young children first solve problems with adult guidance. Caregivers ask questions, offer suggestions, and encourage children to think through challenges. Over time, children begin generating solutions on their own.

How can neglect interfere?

Children who experience neglect may have had few opportunities to learn problem-solving skills with supportive adults. Chronic stress can also make it harder to think flexibly, causing children to react impulsively or believe there are no solutions.

What might this look like?

A child may:

- Become overwhelmed by minor challenges.
- Expect adults to fix every problem.
- React impulsively instead of thinking.
- Become frustrated quickly.
- Have difficulty considering different solutions.

Parenting Implications

Resist solving every problem for your child. Instead, guide them by asking questions such as, "What are some things we could try?" Helping children think through problems builds confidence and independence.

From Understanding to Attunement

Problem-solving is learned through experience. Every challenge your child works through with your support strengthens their belief that they can handle future difficulties.