

Problem solving in early years

Teaching children how to problem solve is one of the hardest things to do.

However, if you provide open-ended materials for children to naturally practise problem-solving, the teaching occurs on its own.

For example, balancing materials in a tower. What items stack well, which don't? Why is that? Balancing items requires strong problem-solving skills. If an item doesn't balance, which way does it need to move for it to balance and not fall?



Guttering can be used in a variety of different ways for problem solving; cars, conkers, balls and water are just a few examples. Children will have to use trial and error problem-solving skills to get the item in the target container.

As an adult, you can set this up as provocation, but children will need to be able to move this around, adapt it to their interests and make it their own.

This is where the real learning takes place.

Den building offers children the opportunity to try out different materials and joining techniques to make an undefined structure. Dens are open-ended. They can be superhero hideouts, castles, houses, pirate ships... whatever the child wants it to be.

Offering a wide range of open-ended large parts supports children to extend their own play and design their own environment. The only limit is their own imagination!