

Portugal Theme: Developing Self Determination

Sub-theme 1: Creative problem solving and decision making

Set of Activities 1: Defining the problem and generating creative solutions

Set of Activities 2: Evaluating the solutions and decision making

Set of Activities 3: Implementing and evaluating the solution

Set 1: Defining the problem and generating creative solutions

Learning Goals

By the end of this unit, children will be able to:

EARLY YEARS

- Identify problems, being able to stop, think and collect information about it
- Recognize that problems have solutions
- Generate creative solutions, understanding that problems can have more than one solution

EARLY PRIMARY

- Identify problems (to stop, think and collect information about it) and understand that problems can be divided, if necessary
- Recognize that problems have solutions and that they can solve problems
- Generate creative solutions, understanding that problems can have different solutions

LATE PRIMARY

- Identify problems (to stop, think and collect information about it), defining objectives, analyzing barriers and facilitators, and understanding that problems can be divided, if necessary
- Recognize that problems have solutions and that they can solve problems but that requires time and effort
- Generate creative solutions, understanding that problems can have different solutions, and that different solutions can be combined

Tips for Teachers

1. Help children understand that sometimes there are problems, conflicts or disagreements but that they can learn how to best manage them if they occur
2. Promote and help children to think and collect information in order to best identify the problems
3. Use everyday problems in the classroom to promote a creative divergent thinking process
4. Give children the opportunity to explore different possibilities in solving difficulties or small problem situations in their everyday class activities (playing, interacting with others), reinforcing that there are different ways to solve problems and that they can think of more than one solution
5. Incorporate these skills in challenging class situations helping children to think about solutions before acting
6. Promote perseverance and optimism for effective problem solving in every day problems
7. Always ask for feedback from take home activities

Activity 1: Helen the Hedgehog Stops to Think

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that to solve a problem they first have to identify it and reflect about it.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this study unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that I have to **stop, think and collect information** to solve everyday problems.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; blank sheets of paper; brown finger paint; crayons, colour pencils or markers

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read this story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

“Helen the Hedgehog wants to play”

It was really cold outside and Helen the hedgehog wanted to play on the hill near the lake. She was used to do it all the time, since it was the most beautiful and funniest place in the forest. But in that day her mother didn't want to let her go because of the weather. It was very cold and Helen didn't want to wear her raincoat, since she would not be able to use her spikes to roll down the hill, like she loved to do. Also she was not allowed to go to the lake alone, it was dangerous.

“Mother, but, I want, I want, I want to go to the lake!!!” “It's always the same you never let me go!” said Helen to her mother! Her mother kept saying. “Today you can't go it's

too cold, also it's dangerous that you go alone, and I can't go with you, because I have to work". I'm so sad. What will I do now?" thought Helen. It seemed difficult finding a solution that could make her happy, because Helen was only thinking how she wanted to go. While she was really sad about it the bell rang; it was Sam the squirrel that came to visit her. Sam arrived at her bedroom's door and said "Hello Helen! How are you? Do you want to come and play outside?" Helen told Sam that she was having a huge problem, explaining what was happening. Sam realized that Helen had a problem and he said: "Okay, we have a problem. But, is it really so huge? First, let's stop and think! The problem is that today you want to play alone outside in the cold weather and your mother does not let you because it is dangerous and you can get sick. Is this the problem Helen?" Helen looked in Sam's eyes and said: "Yes, it is". "Helen, what do you think about we think together and try to find ways to solve it, I mean to find a solution?" asked Sam. Helen opened her eyes, paying a lot of attention to what Sam was telling, and agreed with Sam's proposal. "Hhhmm...Let's think about it together. What can we do?" So they both started thinking on some possible solutions for a while. "We can do others things! We can play a funny game here, at home!" said Sam. But Helen wasn't pleased with this solution because she wanted to go outside. "We can go and play outside another day." But Helen wasn't pleased with this solution because she wanted to go in that day. They continued to think a bit more. "Well, if you come with me and if I wear my warmest sweatshirt, my scarf and my gloves, I won't get wet, and probably my mother will let me go play outside." Helen and Sam thought this was a brilliant idea, the best one they could think of! "Yes, so it is decided! We choose to go together and I will wear a lot of clothes to get warm. Now you just have to ask your mother if it is ok!" replied Sam. After explaining this solution to Helen's mother, she said yes! Once getting really warm, Helen went out with her best friend Sam, rolling down the hill. When they were coming back home, Helen concluded "After all, it is not that difficult to find a good solution to a problem when we stop and think about it!" concluded Helen.

From that day on, Helen learned that in order to solve a problem, the best way is to first stop, think and collect information about it so that she can recognize the problem and think about different ways to solving it.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Did you like the story?
- What happened to Helen?
- What was Helen's problem?
- Did she stop to think and collect information about the problem?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Can you remember a time when you had a problem?
- What was the problem?
- Is it easy to recognize that we have a problem?
- Did you stop to think about the problem?
- Did you gather information to identify the problem?

5. Invite children to make their own hedgehog, using the activity sheet in the resource pack. The teacher will give a blank sheet of paper to each child and, with finger paint, will help the children paint the children's hand on the activity sheet. Each finger can represent one question or one aspect that we can gather to best describe and recognize a problem. Ask the children to colour the rest of the hedgehog Helen, drawing as they wish. The teacher can post on a board the hedgehogs made by the children.

6. At the end of the activity, the teacher must reinforce the idea that we can all have problems in our lives, and either if they are big or small the first thing to do is to recognize them, and to do it, the best thing is to **stop, think and collect information about them**. Tell again to the class what they have learned from the story: When I have a problem like Helen, I must **stop, think and collect information about it**.

Take Home Activity

Children take home their hedgehogs and are invited to talk with their parents about Helen's story, telling the problem and how they found a solution. Together, they can also identify other problems they recall. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 2: Helen the Hedgehog Has a Solution

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that to solve efficiently a problem it is important to have a positive problem solving orientation.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that **problems have solutions**.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; pieces of tissue or paper in the shape of a sweatshirt; colour pencils or markers; glue

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 1 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - Did you like the story?
 - What happened to Helen?
 - What did she do to solve her problem?
 - Did she find a solution?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Can you remember a time when you had a problem? What was the problem?
- Did you believe that you could solve it?
- Was it easy to find a solution to it?

Tell the children that it is normal to have problems, that they all see things in different ways, and that to better solve their problems, they should rather think on solving the problem then blaming themselves or others for what is happening or thinking it is very hard to solve it.

Tell them that some people think that they have a lot of problems, and others think that they don't have any. Sometimes people can have some serious problems, but even they can think in a positive way, since it will be then easier to find solutions for them. Reinforce that they can all learn to have a positive oriented thinking about problems.

5. Ask children to paint Helen sweatshirt, asking them to imagine a very nice one. Children will receive an image with Helen the hedgehog and choose an image of a sweatshirt (available in the resource book), which they can colour. At the end they can glue the sweatshirt in the hedgehog drawing. The teacher can post on the class board all the drawings of the children. *Note:* The teacher will prepare the activity before, cutting paper sweatshirts. If possible, the teacher can also use tissue instead of paper to make the sweatshirts.

6. At the end of the activity, the teacher must reinforce what they have learned, that to **identify problems it is necessary to stop, think and collect information** about them. It is also important to **recognize that they must believe that problems have solutions (be positive)**.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk to their parents about Helen's problem and about common problems that people can have and how important it is to stop and think about them and to believe that there are solutions (be positive). Ask children to draw one situation about a problem together with their parents and to bring it to the next class.

Activity 3: Helen the Hedgehog is Creative

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that to solve a problem they first have to stop and think to identify it, generate creative solutions, and believe that problems can have more than one solution.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Generate creative solutions for a problem, recognizing that **problems can have more than one solution.**

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; blank sheets of paper; images (coat, sweatshirt, shoes, scarf, gloves, umbrella, computer, house, table game) that represent different solutions to the problem described in the story, colour pencils or markers; glue; different materials (wool, tissue, toothpicks, spaghetti); scissors

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness Activity.
2. Recall the story in Activity 1, and read it again, if necessary. Invite children to use hand or finger puppets to represent the characters in the story (Helen, Sam, mother, duck).
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - Did Helen found a solution to the problem?
 - Who helped Helen thinking to find a solution?
 - Could Helen think of more than one solution?

- Can you think about other solutions to Helen’s problem?

4. Then relate the story to the children’s own experiences:

- Can you remember a time when you had a problem?
- Could you think of more than one solution?
- Do you always find the same solution? Or different ones?
- Do you think problems can have more than one solution?

Tell the children that there is often more than one solution to a problem. It’s not always easy to think of other solutions, so, they can learn to use a way that helps them generate lots of ideas – **ideastorm – it can help.**

Ideastorm means saying anything that comes into their minds, without being concerned about how others will react. It’s a great way to come up with good solutions. Usually doesn’t take very long, and it can be really fun. It’s designed to help people find new ways of looking at things.

Any idea is a good one at first. They should try to come up with as many ideas as possible, and, at the beginning, do not judge these ideas. The solutions can be unusual, and they don’t even have to make sense. No idea is too wacky or ridiculous. As crazy as any idea might seem, it might make think of another idea or a better idea. It might even turn out to be the best idea of all!

5. Give an example with a circle, and ask children to think of different ways they can use this image to create any object or character they know. Invite children to participate and count how many ideas the group could get.

6. To put in practice the ideastorm, recall the story, and ask children to make a collage about the story and their characters, thinking about different solutions for Helen’s problem. Each child then shows his collage and explains it to the group.

7. At the end of the activity, the teacher must reinforce the idea that to identify problems it is necessary to stop, think and collect information, and then **be able to generate creative solutions, as many as possible**, since through a creative divergent thinking process problems are thought of, as having more than one solution.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home their collages and talk to their parents about the different solutions to Helen’s problem. Ask children to bring one example of one problem their parents can recall and several (more than one) solutions to solve it. In this way, they can realize that after recognizing

the problem, it is possible to generate more than one creative solution. In the next class, the teacher can ask who talked with their parents and what solutions they have found.

Activity 4: Helen the Hedgehog Finds a Solution

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that the first step to solve a problem is to identify it (to stop, think and collect information), and to find different solutions you can divide problems in smaller parts if necessary.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Identify a problem (to stop, think and collect information), being aware that it is **possible to divide problems**, if necessary.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; pens or pencils; crayons, colour pencils or markers

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the following story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

"Helen's hat is wet"

Helen the hedgehog and Sam the squirrel went for a walk in the forest. Suddenly, it started raining a lot and a strong wind took Helens' hat into the lake. Helen and Sam ran and searched for a tree to protect them from the storm. Helen started crying a lot because this was her favourite hat that she got on her birthday. "I want my hat back!" She was just crying

and couldn't do anything. Sam tried to help her friend and said: "Helen, let's stop to think! Your problem is that you lost your hat. But think positive, we can work out together to see how we can solve this problem." Helen, still crying, told Sam: "What can we do? It is raining a lot and we can't move from here. My hat is in the lake and it is dangerous to go search it. And there is no one here to help us." The squirrel kept optimistic and said: "Helen, don't forget that problems have solutions! We know where your hat is! So we just need to be calm and think on what we can do! Let's first come with as many ideas as possible. It's like inventors do! They can think on so many different ways that sometimes they come to find something new never thought!" Helen and Sam decided to wait until the storm was over. During that time, they thought about different solutions to that problem: to leave the hat in the lake, enter in the water and go search for the hat, find someone with a boat or a good swimmer that could help them, get back home and ask their parents for help. They thought that waiting for someone passing that could help them would be the first solution to try.

At that time, they saw their friend Charlie the duck passing by and they couldn't be happier! "My hat flew into the lake! Charlie, do you think you can help me?" asked Helen. "I will be glad to help you Helen!" Charlie the duck recovered Helen's hat and the hedgehog was very thankful.

At the end of the afternoon, Helen returned home with her friend Sam the squirrel. "Did you see Helen? How important it is to stop to think about the problems, trying to find different solutions?" "You are right Sam! Never forgetting that problems have solutions and that we can solve them!" concluded Helen.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
- What happened to Helen?
- Was it one problem or more than one problem?
- Helen and Sam found different solutions to Helen's problem. What were they?
- What might have happened if Helen didn't stop to think carefully about her problem?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When you have a problem, what do you do?
- Helen's problem was very complicated? What can we do when we have complicated problems?
Can we divide them to find the solution in an easier way?
- Do you always believe that you can solve your problems?
- Do you try to think about more than one solution for your problems?

5. Talk to the children about problems that happened in the classroom and help them to try to remember a problem they have had before. Ask the children to observe the images in the resource pack, where they are asked to divide the problems in smaller parts.

6. Tell the children to make a drawing about a problem and a good solution to it. When they have finished it, and if they want to, they can show their problems/solutions. The teacher can ask the children if they stopped to think about their problems, if they believed that they could be solved, if they asked for help to do it and if they could think of more than one solution. It is important to reinforce the idea that problems can be solved and, if necessary, they can be divided to make the task of solving easier.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk to their parents about the activity they have done at school, describing the problem and how they solved it. Parents can help their children understanding that they can solve everyday problems and that to do so they can divide them in smaller parts, if necessary. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 5: Helen the Hedgehog Can Solve Her Problem

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that problems have solutions and that they are able to solve them.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that problems have solutions and that **I can solve problems.**

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack, crayons, colour pencils or markers; paint of different colours; wood sticks; scotch tape; scissors

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 4 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
 - Helen and Sam found different solutions to Helen's problem. What were they?
 - Where they able to solve the problem?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:
 - When you have a problem, what do you do?
 - Do you always try to think about more than one solution to your problems?

- Do you believe that you can solve your problems?

Tell the children that it is normal to have problems, and that they all see things in different ways, and that to better solve their problems they should rather think on solving the problem then blaming themselves or others for what is happening or thinking it is very hard to solve it.

Tell them that some people think that they have a lot of problems, and others think that they don't have any. Sometimes people can have some serious problems, but even they can think in a positive way, since it will be then easier to find solutions for them. Reinforce that they can all learn to have a positive oriented thinking about problems.

5. Children are invited to make and decorate their own puppet, using the sheet given by the teacher. After painting the animal's images, they will cut them up and paste a wood stick in the back to create their puppets. These can be used to role play the different solutions to Helen's problem and for other everyday problems, reinforcing the idea that children can solve problems.

Take Home Activity

Children can discuss Helen's problem with their parents, thinking about other possible solutions to it. Parents can also talk with the children about choices they have made to solve problems they have had in the past and how they could succeed. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 6: Helen the Hedgehog Thinks About Different Solutions

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that the first two steps to solve a problem are to identify it and to generate creative solutions to it, understanding that problems can have different solutions.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Generate creative solutions for a problem, recognizing that **problems can have different solutions**.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; copies of the activity sheet from the resource pack; pens or pencils

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Recall the story in Activity 4, and read it again, if necessary. Use hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
 - Helen and Sam found different solutions to Helen's problem. Were they really different or were they similar?
 - Can you think about different solutions for Helen's problem?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When you have a problem, what do you do?
- Do you always try to think about more than one solution to your problems?
- Do you always try to think about really different solutions?

Tell the children that there is often more than one solution to a problem. It's not always easy to think of other solutions, so, they can learn to use a way that helps them generate lots of ideas – **ideastorm – it can help.**

Ideastorm means saying anything that comes into their mind, without being concerned about how others will react. It's a great way to come up with good solutions. Usually doesn't take very long, and it can be really fun. It's designed to help people find new ways of looking at things.

Any idea is a good one at first. People should try to come up with as many ideas as possible, and in the beginning do not judge these ideas. The solutions can be unusual, and they don't even have to make sense. No idea is too wacky or ridiculous. As crazy as any idea might seem, it might make think of another idea or a better idea. It might even turn out to be the best idea of all!

5. Ask the children to think about a problem they had and tell them to fulfil the activity sheet from the resource pack. They must try to remember if they could think about really different alternatives to solve it. Each one can share it with the group and together children can see if they could have found other different solutions to each other problems.

6. At the end of the activity, the teacher must reinforce the idea that to identify problems it is necessary to stop, think and collect information about them, and to generate different solutions, as many as possible, through a creative divergent thinking process that focus the quantity and the quality of the solutions.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home the activity sheet they fulfil at school and discuss the identified problem with their parents. Together, they can think about other possible solutions to solve it. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 7: Identifying Problems

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that the first step to solve a problem is to identify it (to stop, think and collect information), defining objectives, analysing barriers and facilitators, and dividing the problem, if necessary.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Identify problems (to stop, think and collect information), dividing them, if necessary, **defining objectives and analysing barriers and facilitators.**

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Activity sheet from the resource pack; scissor; pens or pencils; crayons, colour pencils or markers

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Before starting the activity, the teacher will have to cut the problem cards from the activity sheet, fulfilling the empty ones with problems that mean something to the children.
3. Talk with the children about the process of problem solving and remind them of the importance of starting with the definition of the problem, gathering information, reflecting about it and dividing the problem, if necessary. It is also important to define objectives (something that one's efforts or actions are intended to attain or accomplish) analyse barriers (anything which makes it difficult for someone to do something) and facilitators (anything which makes it easy for someone to do something). Tell them that it is always best to have two

or three solutions to a problem, but in the end to choose the one they think will work best. If they think of one solution at a time, and then think about what might happen if they choose that solution, they can come up with the best one. Of course, it is not possible to know exactly what will happen until trying the solution, but thinking about it and planning can help. Using examples in the problem cards and other examples of everyday problems we can help the children to better understand this process, keeping in mind that “thinking before acting” is good.

4. Tell the children that, together, they are going to build the **classroom problem box**. In order to do it, they must be divided in groups. One group will build the box (model available in the activity sheet from the resource pack) and the others will be responsible for decorating it (using sentences, images). When they have finished, the teacher will put inside the box problem cards and ask the children to sit in a circle. One child will take a card from the box and read the problem loud. Together, children should identify the problem, defining objectives and analysing barriers and facilitators. Why is it important to solve the problem? What can help? What are the barriers and facilitators? Will it help to divide the problem? Every child must take at least one problem-solving situation card from the box, in order to have the opportunity to reflect about it.

5. At the end, the teacher will tell the children that in the following days they will have the opportunity to suggest or write additional problems in the **problem box** so that they can reflect about them in the class.

Take Home Activity

The teacher can ask the children to replicate this activity at home, with their parents, thinking about everyday problems. They can write down new problem situations, take them to school to add in the problem box and to be discussed in the class.

Activity 8: Solving Problems

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that problems have solutions and that they are able to solve them, and to do it with success they must be committed to spend their time and effort.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that **problems** have **solutions** and I can solve them, and that it **requires time and effort**.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

None

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Talk with the children about the problem solving process and remind them of the importance of recognizing that problems have solutions and that they can solve them, and to do it efficiently they must be committed and spend time and effort on that task. For instance, give some examples where this is important, such as: A boy thinks that his brother was mean to him. He told his mother, who punished his brother. But then he was even meaner!; A boy wanted to be friend of a new neighbour, so he gave him one of his best trading cards. But he still didn't want to play with him.
3. Ask children to sit in a circle and tell one child to bring the problem's box to the centre. They will have the opportunity to discuss the problems they added in the box. Ask one child to take a problem card and role play the problem (only using gestures) while the group tries to identify it.

The class will be invited to generate different and creative solutions to it. Every child must take at least one problem card, in order to have the opportunity to role play a problem.

4. At the end, the teacher will tell the children that they will be able to continue to add problems as they wish in the problem's box.

Take Home Activity

Together with the help of their parents, children can try to identify different problems that they have faced, especially problems they felt that were difficult to solve and that required more time and effort. They can write them down, making a list of those "most difficult problems" and bring them back and discuss in the next class.

Activity 9: Combining Different Solutions

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that the first two steps to solve a problem are to define it and to generate and combine creative and different solutions, through alternative creative thinking.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Define a problem and generate creative solutions, being aware that **different solutions can be combined**.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

None

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Talk with the children about the process of problem solving and remind them of the importance of recognizing that problems can have different solutions and that it is possible to combine them in order to achieve a better solution.
3. Ask the child to sit in a circle and tell one child to bring the problem's box to the centre. They will discuss more problems they have inside the box, trying to find creative solutions to them and also to combine different solutions. Ask one child to take a paper and to invite another child to role-play the problem with her. If necessary, it is possible to invite more children to participate in the role-play. Every child must have the opportunity to participate in, at least, one role-play. Discuss the problems that they role played that could be better solved if more than one solution could be combined.

4. At the end, the teacher will tell the children that the box will remain in the classroom and that they will be able to “come back to it” whenever they want to.

Take Home Activity

Children can share with their family member’s problems they have had before when they combined different solutions in order to achieve a better one. They can list the combined solutions to reach the final solution. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Set 2: Evaluating the solutions and decision making

Learning Goals

By the end of this unit, children will be able to:

EARLY YEARS

- Evaluate solutions, recognizing if they are good or bad solutions
- Evaluate solutions, identifying if they are easy or difficult to put into practice
- Evaluate solutions, recognizing if predicted results are appreciated (they like the results)

EARLY PRIMARY

- Evaluate solutions, recognizing if they are good or bad solutions and identifying positive and negative aspects about the solutions
- Evaluate solutions, identifying if they are or not difficult to put into practice, and how much time they need
- Evaluate solutions, recognizing if results are appreciated (they like the results), and how and others feel/think about each solution

LATE PRIMARY

- Evaluate solutions, identifying good and bad things of each solution and recognizing if they are good or bad and positive/negative aspects about them
- Evaluate solutions, identifying if they are or not difficult to put into practice, and how much time and effort they need
- Evaluate solutions, recognizing if results are appreciated (they like the results, how and others feel/think about each solution, and how solutions fit within society values/rules)

Tips for Teachers

1. Explain to the children that the best solution to a problem can be defined in terms of the potential to solve the problem, the change in personal and social well-being and the time/effort required
2. Use everyday problems in the classroom to give opportunity to children to evaluate solutions and its values, and time and effort needed, as well as to evaluate the results of solutions
3. As possible, allow children to participate in the classroom decisions: they will feel they are contributing to something and become more responsible for their decisions
4. Always ask for feedback from take home activities

Activity 1: Helen, Sam and the New Friend Harry Decide to Play

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to evaluate solutions for the problems, recognizing if the solutions are good or bad.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this study unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate solutions for a problem, recognizing if they are **good or bad solutions**.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; crayons, colour pencils or markers

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read this story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

"The new family"

Helen the hedgehog and Sam the squirrel were very anxious to meet the new family of beavers that was moving to the forest. They have heard that one of them was the same age, so they thought they could play all together. One afternoon they were playing near the lake and they saw the beaver playing alone near the water. They decided to invite him to join them. "Hello, my name is Sam and my friend's name is Helen. What's your name?" "I am Harry. I have just moved with my family because my father has a new job here!" "We are very happy to meet you. Do you want to come and play with us? We are going to the other

side of the lake. Over there we always find a lot of funny things to do.” said Sam and Helen.
“Ok, I will tell my mother that I am going with you.” answered the beaver.

So they went together, walking and talking about the things they liked and disliked. They played together all the afternoon, digging holes, climbing trees, rolling down the hill. Helen and Sam were very happy with their newest friend, Harry – he seemed really nice!

By the end of the afternoon, they arrived at Harry’s home and were saying goodbye when Harry asked: “Sam, do you want to come with me tomorrow, to search for branches and nuts in the forest?” Without reflecting, Sam answered “I would love to!” Helen interrupted Sam reminding him that they had agreed to help Helen’s mother in her cleanings. “We can do it in another day Helen!” replied Sam, the squirrel.

The next day, Helen had to help her mother but she was really sad because Sam was not with her. Sam also was sad and not having fun because he kept thinking about Helen and how she was disappointed with him. On the afternoon, he went to talk to Helen and asked her to forgive him.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Did you like the story?
- Who was the newest friend of Helen and Sam?
- Sam made a choice. Was it good or bad?

4. Then relate the story to the children’s own experiences:

- When you have a problem, do you stop to think about how to solve it?
- Can you give one example of a good decision you have made?

5. The teacher can tell the children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions and its value and then make a decision, choosing one. If they ran into the street to chase a ball without first gathering information about their actions, they know what can happen. And when they know what might happen, they can avoid making wrong decisions or feeling bad about their actions.

6. Invite children to make a drawing about the story, using the activity sheet available in the resource pack (Sam's bad choice/Sam's good choice). Children will be helped to think about what they would have done if they were Sam the squirrel (good solution). When the children have completed it, have them talk about why they think they chose a good solution and what consequences the bad options might have.

6. By the end of the activity, the teacher can ask each child to describe her drawing and talk about good solutions they thought of. After evaluating the solutions children can choose the best solution of the group. Tell children that before they do something they think it might be wrong, they should consider what might happen—who might be hurt, what might be damaged, and so on. Rules are made for a purpose, and it's always smart to make good choices. Good choices can help them solve problems.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk with their parents about the activity they have done at school. Parents can help the children to evaluate Sam's choice and a bad/good choice made by the children before. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 2: Sam the Squirrel and His Solution

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to evaluate time and effort needed to decide on a solution to a problem and evaluate if that solution is difficult to put in practice.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that in order to choose the solution to a problem, I have to evaluate if it is difficult **to put into practice**.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 1 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - Did you like the story?
 - Who was the newest friend of Helen and Sam?
 - Did Sam stop to think about what Harry proposed him?
 - What do you think of Sam's decision? Was it difficult for him to decide?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:
 - When you have a problem, do you take time to think about the solutions?

- Do you try to understand if it is a difficult solution to put into practice?

5. The teacher can remind the children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must find solutions, anticipate the consequences and make a decision. Deciding on a solution requires also thinking about how difficult is to put the solution in practice. Taking the time to think and talk about what may happen, and how difficult it will be to put the solution into practice will help them and other people work things out. It is also important to notice that sometimes, even if a solution is difficult to put in practice, they can try hard.

6. Ask the children to think about other solutions that Sam could have found. Give puppets to two children and invite them to role play the story they have just heard. Propose that Sam must now think and decide differently, according to what they think it could have been a better solution. All the solutions must be discussed in group.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk to their parents about the story they have heard at school and ask them if they can think of other solutions to Sam's problem. Together, they can reflect about the evaluation of the solutions for a problem (how difficult will it be to put the solution for this problem in practice) and the decision making process. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 3: Sam the Squirrel Makes a Decision

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that they must evaluate the results of the solutions before making a decision.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate the results of a solution, recognizing if **I will like the result** and if **the solution will solve or not the problem**.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; blank sheets of paper; activity sheet from the resource pack; scissor; crayons, colour pencils or markers; glue

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness Activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 1 using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - Did you like the story?
 - Who was the newest friend of Helen and Sam?
 - Sam made a choice. Did he like the result?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When you have a problem, do you stop to think about the results of possible solutions?
- Can you give an example of a decision you have made? Did you like the result? Did it solve the problem?

5. Talk to the children about the previous activity, reminding the importance of identifying and generating creative solutions to problems. To make a decision, it is important to evaluate the results, before deciding what to do, understanding if the solution will solve or not the problem and if children will like the result.

6. Before starting the activity, the teacher must prepare a group of problem-situation cards (with common problem situations that the children might face), as well as a dice according to the model available in the activity sheet from the resource pack.

7. The teacher will ask a child to take a card and roll the dice. If it lands on the “like” side, the child must think of a solution he/she thinks he/she would like the result. If it lands on the “dislike” side, he/she must think of a solution he/she thinks he/she wouldn’t like the result. All children must roll the dice at least once, practising making decisions, evaluating solutions and its results. The game can continue, asking children to anticipate if the solutions they liked most will solve or not the problem.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home the activity sheet from the resource pack to create their own dice. Together with their parents, they can play this game, thinking about other problems that could possibly happen.). On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they did with their parents at home.

Activity 4: Sam the Squirrel Evaluates the Solution

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to evaluate solutions for the problems, recognizing good and bad solutions through the identification of costs and benefits of each solution.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate solutions for a problem, recognizing if they are good or bad solutions by identifying **good and bad aspects of each solution.**

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; copies of the activity sheet from the resource pack; crayons, colour pencils or markers; transparent sticker paper; scissors

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the following story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

"Helen's magic board"

Helen the hedgehog received a drawing kit with a magic board, brushes, colourful paints and a painter's hat from her father. This board was very special because she could draw anything and after finishing the painting she could erase it with a magic sponge and make a new painting. Her father warned her: "Helen, the only thing you can't do is to paint the entire board with black because the sponge will not erase the colour black." "Ok, if that is

the only think I cannot do...why would I want to paint everything in black? It wouldn't be funny at all." answered Helen.

Sam the squirrel came to see Helen and they decided to try painting in the magic board together. Sam told Helen: "Do you know that you can make up new colours by mixing the ones you have?" "To invent new colours?" asked Helen. "Yes, just mix two colours like yellow and red!" said the squirrel. "Great. Now I have orange!" exclaimed the hedgehog.

From that day on, both spent lots of time together painting and having lots of fun. One afternoon, the two friends were playing together and Sam said: "What about doing something fantastic? All we need is lots of black paint." "Black paint?" asked Helen. "Yes, black paint, what's the problem?" replied the squirrel. Helen explained Sam that her father told her she couldn't use black paint on the board. But Sam asked: "No? Why not?" "Because my father told me that the sponge can't erase black paint." clarified the hedgehog. "Oh, you! Always doing whatever father tells you to do! Let's try it!" said Sam. "But my father told me..." insisted Helen. Sam didn't give up: "There you go...you are just afraid to try it." And they continued: "No I am not!" "Yes, you are!" "No I am not!" "Yes you are!" "No I am not!"

Helen decided to show Sam that she was not afraid, without thinking on the consequences. She got the black paint and filled up the board with paint until not even a white spot was left. When she finished Sam said: "See? Fantastic!" Helen felt good with Sam's approval and acceptance until she started to try to erase the black painting to start doing a new one. The sponge was not cleaning the black paint just like her father told her. Helen started crying a lot saying: "I just ruined the board. How can I paint now?"

At that time, Helen's father arrived home and heard her daughter crying: "What has happened Helen? The hedgehog explained her father what they have done. "Now you don't need to cry. Let's think what we can do." Helen's father went to his garage to get a special liquid. "This may help to clean the black paint, but the board will never be the same. If you had told me before, the paint would be fresh and it would be much easier to clean the board." he said.

Helen was however glad because she could do other paintings. From that day on she decided not to use black paint.

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
- Helen made a choice. What was it?
- Can you identify good things of her choice? And bad things?
- Do you think Helen or Sam could have done something different?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When you have a problem, do you stop to think about possible solutions?
- If they are good or bad and why?
- Can you remember a decision that you made?
- Can you identify good and bad things of that solution?

5. The teacher can tell the children that taking time to think and talk about what may happen will help to work things out. Ask children if they remember the first steps they can use in problem solving. When they have a problem, they must stop and think, collect information to better identify it. Second, they must think of different solutions and before choosing one they must evaluate the solutions and its value, reflecting about the good and bad things (costs and benefits) of each solution.

6. The teacher distributes one activity sheet in the format of 2 puzzle pieces for each child. Ask the children to think about a problem they had before and how they solve it (reflecting about good and bad things of each solution). They must make a drawing about the solution to that problem, using the left piece of the puzzle to show the good things of the solution, and the right piece of the puzzle to show the bad things of the solution. When they have finished, help them to line the sheet on both sides with transparent sticker paper and cut it with a scissor, splitting the two pieces of the puzzle. The teacher can ask each child to talk about her problem and the good and bad things of the solution they have chosen. At the end, the children can mix all the puzzle pieces and try to match them correctly.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk to their parents about the work they have done at school and the problem they chose to present. They can explore different solutions to that problem, identifying good and bad aspects about them. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 5: Helen the Hedgehog's Decision

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to evaluate how much time a solution needs and evaluate if that solution is difficult to put in practice.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that in order to choose the **solution** to a problem, I have to assess if it is difficult to put into practice, evaluating **how much time** is **needed**.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; wool-novel; cards for the story made by the children (contexts: beach, mountain, city; characters: child, adolescent, young lady, old man; problems: natural catastrophes, an old house, an ambulance)

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 4 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
 - Helen made a choice. What was it?
 - Did she take time to reflect on the decision she made?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When you have a problem, do you stop to think about the solutions you make?
- Do you think if a solution is faster to put into practice you should decide to choose that solution?
- Can you remember a decision that you made? Did it take time to put into practice?

5. The teacher can remind the children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions and make a decision. Deciding on a solution implies also to think if the solution is difficult or not to put in practice and how much time will they need to put it into practice.

6. Start the activity, asking the children to sit in a circle. They must create a story where each child must participate in the development of the story. Tell them that all stories have problems, but also solutions, and that they are going to create a new story where a character is having some troubles and they are going to help to find a happy ending to the story (good solution). Pick a wool-novel and start the story saying "Once upon a time... ". Pass the wool-novel to a child that must pick a card and continue the story based on the card (character) the child gets. Then the child must pass the novel to a second child that picks another card (context), and again continues the story adding the image in the card. The same happens with a third problem-situation card. All the children must participate in the development, helping to clarify the problem, to think of solutions, evaluating time needed to each solution and to make a decision (the story must have a happy ending).

Take Home Activity

Children are invited to make a similar activity with their family members, making their own problem-situation cards. Ask children to bring to school the material they did with their parents at home.

Activity 6: Helen the Hedgehog and The Results of Her Solution

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that they must evaluate the results of the solutions before making a decision, thinking about how he/she and others feel with each solution.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate the results of a solution, recognizing if I like the result and **how I and others feel with it.**

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; scissor

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 4 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
 - Helen made a choice. Did she evaluate the results of it?
 - Did she feel good about her choice? And Sam?
 - What do you think her father felt?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- When you have a problem, do you stop to think about the results of possible solutions?
- Can you give an example of a decision you have made?
- Did it solve the problem? How did you feel about it? How did that decision make others feel?

5. Remind children of the importance of identifying and generating creative solutions to problems. To make a decision, it is important to evaluate the results, understanding if the solutions will solve or not the problem and if they will like the results. It is also important to think about how they and others will feel with each solution.

6. The teacher asks children in the class to work in pairs. Using the activity sheet from the resource pack, distributes the problem-situation cards ensuring that each pair has, at least, two cards (if necessary, the teacher can add other cards to the activity). They must discuss their problem-situation cards, finding solutions to them, and evaluating how those solutions will make them and others feel. At the end, the groups can share their work with the class.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home the problem-situation cards and discuss them with their parents. Together, they can think about other solutions to solve those problems, trying to identify the ones they and others will feel better about. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 7: How Good and How Bad?

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to evaluate solutions for the problems, recognizing good and bad solutions through the identification of costs and benefits of each solution and the value attributed to each **cost and benefit (how good and how bad)**.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate solutions for a problem, identifying good and bad things of each solution and **how good and how bad each of these things are**.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Copies of the activity sheets from the resource pack; pens or pencils

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. The teacher can tell the children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions, reflecting about good and bad things of each solution, as well as how good and how bad these things are to them, before making the decision.
3. Ask the children to form groups of three. Give them the first activity sheet from the resource pack to discuss in group and to choose the solution that they consider to be the best one (considering good and bad things of each solution and the value associated to each one of

these good and bad things). At the end, the different groups must present their solutions and the reasons why they chose them. The teacher can reinforce the idea that the process of making decisions it is not easy and it needs time and attention to lead to positive outcomes.

4. Move to another activity, asking the children to remind an important decision they have made and, based on that, give them the second activity sheet from the resource pack to fulfil. At the end, if they want, they can share their decisions with the group and the teacher can help them to understand that evaluating solutions requires thinking about their values.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home the second activity sheet they fulfilled at school and discuss the problem they have elected with their parents. Together, they can think about other solutions to it, evaluating them and writing their conclusions. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 8: Deciding Takes Time and Effort

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to evaluate how much time and effort a solution needs and evaluate if that solution is difficult to put in practice.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Recognize that in order to elect the **solution** to a problem, I have to assess if it is difficult to put in practice, evaluating **how much time and effort are needed**.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Activity sheet from the resource pack; scissor; box; paper; pens or pencils

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. The teacher can remind the children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions and make a decision. They also must think if the solution is difficult or not to put in practice and how much time and effort will the solution need in order to decide in a specific direction.
3. First, play the game “Tangram” with the children: Divide the children in groups of three and give them the pieces of the “Tangram” (cut the model available in the activity sheet from the resource pack). Tell them that they have to form a square with all the pieces. This will let them try different solutions until they find the correct one, spending time and effort in the task.
4. Ask each child to write a problem and put it inside the box. It can be a problem they have or another one that they can imagine. After everyone has written and placed their problems, the

teacher asks a child to take a paper of the box and to read the problem. As a group, the children must discuss it, evaluating possible solutions, and making a decision. Each child must take of a paper from the box until they are finished. After this, the children can be divided in pairs to represent, in role-play, their problem-situations and the chosen solution. Discuss how evaluating solutions need time and effort.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk to their parents about the problems discussed at school and together, they can try to think about other solutions, writing them down, and recognizing time and effort needed for each solution. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 9: Solution's Results

Learning Goal

Children will recognize that they must evaluate the results of the solutions before making a decision, thinking about how he/she and others feel with each solution and how each one of them fits in **society values/rules**.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate the results of a solution, recognizing if I like the result, how I and others feel with it, and **how the solution fits in society rules**.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Activity sheet from the resource pack; blank sheets of paper; pens or pencils; glue; cardboard; children's photographs

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Remind children of the importance of identifying and generating creative solutions to problems. To make a decision, it is important to evaluate the results, understanding if the solutions will solve or not the problem and if they like the results. It is also important to think about how they and others will feel with each solution, and how the solution fits in society rules.
3. Divide children in groups and ask them to think about rules that are important in different contexts (school, home, society in general). Some examples are available in the resource pack. Summarize the rules, writing them on the board. Now tell the groups that they must think of everyday problems and solutions to them, evaluating how the rules they mentioned influence

their decision making. At the end, the solutions must be discussed, as well as the importance of society rules that commonly help them to make decisions.

Take Home Activity

Children can make a list of home, family and society rules with their parents, describing how each one influences their everyday decisions. Ask children to bring to school the material they have done with their parents.

Set 3: Implementing and evaluating the solution

Learning Goals

By the end of this unit, children will be able to:

EARLY YEARS

- Solve a problem by trying on a solution – go and do it
- Evaluate the results of the solution that was put into practice and try again, if necessary
- Solve a problem, naming the three steps of problem solving process

EARLY PRIMARY

- Solve a problem by trying on a solution that combines more than one solution
- Evaluate the results of problem's solutions and how they feel, trying again, if necessary
- Solve a problem, naming the three steps of problem solving process and their keywords

LATE PRIMARY

- Solve a problem by trying on a solution and checking how it is running, combining more than one solution, if necessary
- Evaluate the results of problem's solutions, how they and others feel and trying again if necessary
- Solve a problem, naming and describing the three steps of problem solving process and their keywords

Tips for Teachers

1. Take advantage of moments at school to model creative problem-solving steps with the children, parents, and staff members
2. Use everyday problems in the classroom to apply problem solving skills/strategies
3. Use everyday problems in the classroom to apply decision making implementation and evaluation skills
3. Allow children to participate in daily classroom decisions: they will feel that they are contributing to something and become more responsible for their decisions
4. By involving the children in the decision making process, we will see greater cooperation, collaboration, positive motivation, self-esteem and autonomy
5. Always ask for feedback from take home activities

Activity 1: Sam the Squirrel and Helen the Hedgehog Solve a Problem

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to implement a solution to solve a problem, trying it.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this study unit, I will be able to:

Solve a problem by trying on a solution – **go and do it.**

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; ball

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read this story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

“The nest is mine”

One bright and sunny day, Helen the hedgehog and Sam the squirrel were playing in the forest, like they used to do every afternoon. Helen was searching for insects while Sam was digging holes, trying to find buried nuts. Mama bird and her family were flying making a lot of noise. They have decided to emigrate so that they could live in a warmer forest. Mama bird came to say goodbye and said: “Helen and Sam do you see this nest above in the tree? If you want it’s yours. My little daughters’ don’t need it anymore they are now grown up girls and besides we all decided to move from this nice forest. Because we love the warm weather,

we will go to live in a warmer forest in the south.” After saying goodbye to the family birds, suddenly, and at the same time, they saw the amazing nest, appearing to be really warm and soft. They ran to it, trying to get there first, because they could see that the nest did not have enough space for both of them. Pushing and pulling each other, they started to argue. “The nest is mine. I saw it first, Helen!” said Sam the squirrel. “No, no Sam, you are wrong! We arrived at the same time!” said Helen. After that long discussion, they were feeling very angry because they didn’t want to share the nest – they were having a problem.

“Ok, Sam, stop. We don’t need to continue this fight. We are having a problem here. Whom does this nest belong to? What can we do now?” asked Helen. Sam a bit calmer said: “You can continue searching for insects while I stay here, playing in my nest!” “Or you can go search for more nuts!” said Helen. At that time, it seemed difficult to find a good solution to their problem. Sam started thinking and proposed: “Well, we can agree to play in the nest in different days. For instance, today the nest is for me, but tomorrow it will be yours and so on.” Helen started to feel happier but then she just thought on the disadvantages of this solution: “But then we can’t play and have fun together in the nest! Sam replied: “We can play together out of the nest...” Helen suggested: “Maybe we could share it and play here at the same time!” “That seems an excellent idea, Helen! Although the nest is not very big if we shrink maybe we can fit inside the nest at the same time. Let’s try it to see if it works!” concluded the squirrel.

In fact they could fit together in the nest. Helen and Sam played for the rest of the afternoon and they had lots of fun. When they were coming back home, very happy for the time spent together, they realized that they found a very good solution to their problem. “Do you know Sam, it is not that difficult to find solutions to our problems. We just have to think about them, search for possible options, choose the one that looks better and try it. And even if it doesn’t work, we can always try again and again and do it in another way!” reflected Helen. Sam smiled and agreed. “You always have nice things to say! That’s why you are my best friend, Helen!”

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Did you like the story?
- Sam and Helen had a problem. How did they solve it?
- Was it a good solution?
- Do you think they were happy with the solution?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Have you ever had a problem like this?
- What did you do?
- Did you find a good solution?
- How did you feel with it?

5. The teacher can tell the children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions and its value, make a decision and try it out (implementing the solution). It is important to have the opportunity to try, experiencing solving a problem because their experience will help solving future problems.

6. Ask the children to sit in a circle and give the ball to one of them. The child that has the ball must say the three words always following the same order. The first child has to say "bip", the second "boing", and the third "pim", and it continues until someone gets the wrong order. If so, they will have to start again. They can then try with the three steps for problem solving they have learned before – "Stop and think", "Find a solution", "Go and do it" (they can add gestures to each of the three steps). Every child must pass the ball, at least once.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk with their parents about the story they have heard at school and together they can think about other solutions to Helen and Sam's problem. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 2: Sam the Squirrel and Helen the Hedgehog Learn to Share

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to solve a problem by implementing a solution, evaluating its results and trying again, if necessary.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate the results of the solution to a problem and try again, if necessary.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; blank sheets of paper; old magazine with images/activity sheet from the resource pack; crayons, colour pencils or markers

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Recall story in Activity 1, and read it again to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - Did you like the story?
 - Sam and Helen had a problem. How did they solve it?
 - Were they pleased with the solution? What were the consequences of the solution they decided to put into practice?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Have you ever had a problem like this?
- What did you do?
- Did you reach a good solution? Were you happy with the results?

5. The teacher can remind children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions, its value, make a decision and implement the solution they think is the best one. After putting the solution into practice, it is important to evaluate the results of the solution, in order to see if it solved the problem. If necessary, they should start all over again and try another way to solve the problem.

6. Children will be asked to make a collage about Helen and Sam's problem, cutting and pasting images from old magazines (trees, bushes, clouds, birds, nests, flowers, etc.) or using the images available in the activity sheet from the resource pack to decorate it. At the end, the group can discuss Sam and Helen's decision and the results of it.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home their drawings to share the story with their parents. Together, they can also think about a problem they have had, evaluating the decision they made. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 3: Sam the Squirrel and Helen the Hedgehog Have Fun Together

Learning Goal

Children will be able to solve a problem, naming the three steps of problem solving process.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Solve a problem, **naming the three steps** of problem solving process.

Age Group

Early Years

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; paper strips with the three steps of problem solving; crayons, colour pencils or markers; “class problems” handmade book

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness Activity.
2. Recall the story in Activity 1 and invite children to use hand or finger puppets as they listen to the story.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - Did you like the story?
 - Sam and Helen had a problem. What was it?
 - Did they think about different solutions to the problem?
 - Do you think they have made the right decision? Why?
4. Then relate the story to the children’s own experiences:

- Have you ever had a problem like this?
- What did you do?
- Did you think about different solutions?
- Did you reach a good solution?
- What did you have to do until you find the best solution?

5. The teacher can remind children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions and its value and make a decision, implementing the solution and evaluating their results. Show the images of the three steps for problem solving and recall the three sentences, asking children to think of different gestures to represent the three steps (images included in the resource pack).

6. Divide the children in pairs and ask them to think about one problem (that they have experienced or not) and role-play it to the group, considering what they have learned about problem solving (the three steps). The class can make comments of what they have seen, if they liked, if that was a good solution. The teacher will reinforce the use of all the problem solving steps. The teacher can help the children so that they don't miss any step.

7. Tell the children that they are now going to do a poster with the name of the steps of problem solving. Ask them to identify the three steps and write it on the board. Divide children in three groups. Each will have one a paper strip with one step of problem solving, that they can decorate as they wish. At the end, they must put the steps in the correct order posting it in the classroom. The teacher can create a book with good examples of problems solved. This book "I can solve problems" will have as many pages as the children of the classroom.

Take Home Activity

The book "I can solve problems" will go to each child's home so that each child can make a drawing of a problem solved successfully (a good solution to a problem). Parents can help their child's in this task.

Activity 4: Helen The Hedgehog Has to Decide What To Do

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to implement a solution to solve a problem, trying it, even if it is necessary to combine more than one solution.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Solve a problem by trying a solution that **combines more than one solution**.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; scissor

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the beginning of the following story to the children using hand or finger puppets:

“The trap”

In that morning it was raining a lot. Helen the hedgehog was going to meet Sam at his place because they agreed going together to school. The floor was very wet and slippery and there were a lot of dangers in the forest. She barely could see the road. Suddenly she saw Harry, the beaver, in a hole, stuck in a trap. Immediately, she thought that she should to help him. Helen was so nervous and afraid that she could not think of what to do. It was dangerous to get closer because the soil was soaked and she could also get injured. Helen was really afraid and didn't know what to do.

Can you help her?

3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Helen was having a problem. What was it?
- How do you think she could solve that problem?
- Could she combine different solutions to reach a good solution?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Can you think about a problem you had before?
- What did you do?
- Did you think about different solutions?
- Did you find a good solution?
- Did you think on a solution that in fact combined two good solutions so that the problem could be even better solved?

5. The teacher can tell children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions, its value, decide on the best solution, and implement that solution. It is important to have the opportunity to try on a solution and also to combine more than one solution to better solve the problem.

6. The teacher asks the children to work in pairs. Using the activity sheet from the resource pack, distributes the problem-situation cards (that must have been completed with other problem-situations that the teacher thinks that are important to explore) ensuring that each pair has, at least, two cards. They must discuss their problem-situation cards, finding a good solution that combines more than one solution and, at the end, share their work with the rest of the group. Then each pair can role-play the situation in front of the class. After each problem is role-played, ask for someone to summarize what has been the solution. The whole class can discuss then if the solution was a good one and if they could improve it by combining two solutions.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home problem-situation cards and discuss with their parents if the solutions for the problems were the best ones, and if combining more than one solution the result could be even better. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 5: Helen The Hedgehog Feels Good About Her Decision

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to implement a solution to solve a problem, evaluating its results and how they feel about it, trying again, if necessary.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate the results of problem's solutions **and how I feel**, trying again, if necessary.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; copies of the activity sheet from the resource pack; pens or pencils; crayons, colour pencils or markers

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 4 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:
 - Helen was having a problem. What was it?
 - How do you think she could solve that problem?
 - Would that solution solve the problem?
 - How do you think she would feel at the end?
 - And if she didn't succeed, could she try again?
4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Can you think about a problem you had before?
- What did you do?
- Did you think about different solutions?
- Did you find a good solution?
- Where you happy with it? How did that solution make you feel?
- Did you take that decision at first or did you have to try again?

5. The teacher can remind children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must think of possible solutions, evaluate the solutions and its value, make a decision choosing the best solution and implement that solution. After that, it is important to evaluate the results of the solution, so that they can identify if it solved the problem, and how they felt about it. Also tell the children that sometimes problems are difficult to solve, and if the solution tried out didn't work, they can always try again until they reach success.

6. Start the activity, giving each child an activity sheet from the resource pack. Tell them to think about a problem they have solved and draw it, answering to some questions about it. At the end, the children must discuss their works, debating their problems and the solutions they have found to them, evaluating how successful the solutions were, and how they felt about them.

Take Home Activity

Children can take home their own activity sheet and share again some of the problems discussed in the classroom with their parents. If they want they can add new situations in the activity sheet that happened to them in the last week and bring it back to school.

Activity 6: Helen the Hedgehog Is a Problem Solver

Learning Goal

Children will be able to solve a problem, naming the three steps of problem solving process, and identifying their keywords.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Solve a problem, **naming the three steps** of problem solving process **and** their **keywords**.

Age Group

Early Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Hand or finger puppets; activity sheet from the resource pack; colour cardboards with the steps and keywords of creative problem solving process; blank pieces of cardboard; crayons, colour pencils or markers; paints of different colours; different kind of materials (tissue, magazine cuts, colour paper, wool, etc.); scissors; yarn; two crossed wood sticks

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Read the story in Activity 4 to the children using hand or finger puppets.
3. First, help the children to process the story by asking them:

- Helen was having a problem. What was it?
- How do you think she could solve that problem?
- Would that solution solve the problem?
- How do you think she would feel at the end?
- And if she didn't succeed, could she try again?

4. Then relate the story to the children's own experiences:

- Can you think about a problem you had before?
- What did you do?
- Did you think about different solutions?
- Did you find a good solution?
- Where you happy with it? How did that solution make you feel?
- Did you take that decision at first or did you have to try again?

5. Before starting the activity, the teacher must have the steps of the problem solving process printed in pieces of cardboard. Remind children of the process of problem solving. When they have a problem, after defining it and generating creative solutions, they must evaluate the solutions and make a decision, implementing and evaluating the solution. It is important to be aware of these three steps.

6. Divide children in groups and ask them to finish the story thinking on the best decision for Helen's problem. Invite the groups to present their solutions to Helen's problem and elect the best one. After each solution is discussed, ask for someone to summarize what has been said. The class should try to come up with a solution that satisfies everyone. Tell the children that, together, they will build a mobile about the story they have heard and finished to hang on the classroom. To do it, each pair of two children must create one element of the story (characters, elements of the forest) or decorate one of the cardboards with a step of the problem solving process and its keywords, using different materials. At the end, the teacher will hang the pieces in strings in two crossed wood sticks, creating a colourful mobile. The children will remember the importance of solving problems and making decisions whenever they look to the classroom mobile.

Take Home Activity

The teacher can take a picture of the mobile and give it to the children, so that they can take it home. They can show it to their parents and talk about the activity they have done at school and the process of problem solving (see an example in the resource pack). On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 7: Trying on Solutions

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to implement a solution to solve a problem, trying it and checking how it is running.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Solve a problem by trying on a solution and **checking how it is running**.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Basic

Materials needed

Copies of the activity sheet from the resource pack; pens or pencils

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. The teacher can tell the children that when they have a problem, after defining it and generating creative solutions, they must evaluate the solutions and make a decision, implementing the solution. It is important to have the opportunity to try on a solution, to understand that it is possible to combine more than one solution to reach a goal, and to check how it is running.
2. Play the game “Tangled up” with the children: Two children are out of the game and the rest of the group joins hands to form a chain. The child at one end begins to wave in and out, leading other members into a “tangle” without breaking the links. Players can go over/under arms; between legs, etc. Then, the two children that are out of the chain try to untangle the group by giving instructions only. They cannot touch the chain at all. This exercise will help the children to learn to work together during problem-solving. They will also realize that even when

it is difficult to solve a problem, by trying different ways and checking how it is running, they will come to a solution in the end.

4. Before the activity, the teacher will have to think about problems that can mean something to the children or are related to some subject that they are working on at the moment and write them on the blank square of the activity sheet from the resource pack (that must be copied as many times as needed). Divide the children in small groups and give each group two or three different problems to think about, using the activity sheet. They will have to discuss the problems presented and complete the chart with the necessary information (identification of the problem; possible solutions; best solution). When every group have finished, discuss the answers between the groups and try to elect the best solution of the class to each problem, considering how it will work.

Take Home Activity

Children are invited to talk with their parents about everyday problems and how important it is to try on solutions, checking if they are working or not. On the next day in class, the teacher can ask about what they have talked with their parents.

Activity 8: How do I and Others Feel About It?

Learning Goal

Children will be prepared to implement a solution to solve a problem, evaluating its results and how they and others feel about it, trying again, if necessary.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Evaluate the results of problem's solutions **and how I and others feel**, trying again, if necessary.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Intermediate

Materials needed

Blank sheets of paper; pens or pencils

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. The teacher can remind children that when they have a problem, after identifying it, they must evaluate the solutions and its value and make a decision, implementing the solution. After that, it is important to evaluate the results of the solution, understanding if it solved the problem, and how they and others felt about it. Tell the children that if doesn't work, they can always try again and again until they reach success.
3. Using and exploring examples of everyday problems can help the children to better understand this process. Divide children in small groups and ask each group to think and write down in a paper one problem. Each problem must be role-played by another group that will try to find different solutions to it. All groups must discuss the solutions presented and how they felt with them. It is important to give every child the opportunity to be involved in one role-

playing. At the end, they must reflect about the solutions they found, evaluating their results and what people felt about them.

Take Home Activity

Together with the help of their family, children can try to identify different problems they had before, what were their results and how they and others felt when they solved it. They can write down the conclusions they have reached. Ask children to bring to school the material they have done with their parents.

Activity 9: The Great Journey

Learning Goal

Children will be able to solve a problem, naming and describing the three steps of problem solving process, identifying their keywords.

Learning Outcome. By the end of this unit, I will be able to:

Solve a problem, **naming and describing the three steps** of problem solving process **and** their **keywords**.

Age Group

Late Primary

Level

Advanced

Materials needed

Activity sheet from the resource pack (board game, instructions and cards); dice

Activity Steps

1. Start the lesson with a Mindfulness activity.
2. Talk to the children about the previous activities, reminding them of the process of problem solving. When they have a problem, after defining it and generating creative solutions, they must evaluate the solutions and make a decision, implementing and evaluating the solution. It is important to be aware of these three steps.
3. This activity consists in a board game that includes the stages (defining the problem and generating alternative solutions; evaluating the solutions and decision making; implementing and evaluating the solution) of the problem solving process. Each stage has a different number of houses in order to work on different aspects of them. The game can be played by teams (4 to 5 teams of 3 to 4 children's). An additional team, the judge team is composed by 2 to 4 children's. The teacher may help, if necessary. To begin, each team selects a token and place it on the Go space on the board only when their first turn to move arrives. Each team, in turns,

rolls one dice and moves forward (clockwise around the board) the number of spaces indicated by the dice rolled. Action is then taken depending on the space on which the team lands. When a team stops in one house, they should pick one card (of the pile that is in centre of the board) and read the instructions in the card that corresponds to one problem-solving step learned. After reading the instruction of the question/task proposed the team must give the answer or perform the action requested. The answer/performance is evaluated by the judges – giving a global a score from 0 to 2 (according to the adequacy of the answer- number of solutions /questions/information/consequences or creativity demonstrated). The number of houses that the team moves forward corresponds to the score attributed by the judges. The first team to reach the end is the winner team.

Take Home Activity

Children can talk to their parents about the game and how that helped them to better understand all the process of problem solving. Together, they can do a poster with the three steps of problem solving, their keywords and present it in the classroom.