



## Problem Solving Techniques

By Georgia Bowen

**At The Creative Preschool,** problem solving techniques have been used by parents taking the parenting course in situations that occur repeatedly such as the following.

- When a child says, "I don't have any friends!"
- When siblings are frequently fighting or grabbing from each other and hitting on a regular basis
- Difficulty getting ready for school in the morning
- Having tantrums in the store over wanting to buy something
- Having challenging bedtime

*How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* by Faber and Mazlish also has helpful advice on problem solving. *Positive Discipline* by Jane Nelson covers problem solving as well. All three of these approaches acknowledge feelings and then begin problem solving. The trend today is away from punishing children for misbehaviour and more about taking every opportunity to learn how to express feelings and solve problems. In order to do

this we need to know how to acknowledge our own feelings as well as the child's without placing blame or lecturing. We need to listen respectfully. We need to state the problem as objectively as possible, ask how we might solve the problem, come to an agreed solution and then take action.

Problem solving can occur spontaneously over smaller incidents that happen suddenly or you can have a more formal problem solving session at a family meeting where you write down everyone's ideas and draw up a contract and tape it to the wall.

A child shouldn't have to feel worse to do better. Punishment certainly makes everyone feel worse. Problem solving and family meetings are wonderful methods to establish early in a family and it will certainly pay off as the children grow older.