

In This Session

Learning Objectives

- ▶ Understand why teaching key social and emotional skills is needed.
- ▶ Identify the best time for teaching of social and emotional skills.
- ▶ Identify feeling words and identify effective ways to teach feeling vocabulary.
- ▶ Identify how the use of calming strategies can be used to cope with feelings and teach self-regulation skills.
- ▶ Learn how to teach problem-solving skills.

Family Materials

- ▶ Positive Solutions Family Handbook
 - ▶ Resources
- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Backpack Connection: How to Help Your Child Learn to Share | 6. Self-Regulation Skills: Breathing Strategies |
| 2. Backpack Connection: How to Teach Your Child to Appropriately Get Your Attention. | 7. Taking a Break: Using a Calm Down Area at Home |
| 3. Feeling Face Cards | 8. Problem Solving Steps Poster |
| 4. This is How I Feel Today board (Feeling Check-In) | 9. <i>We Can Be Problem Solvers at Home</i> scripted story |
| 5. <i>Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think at Home</i> scripted story | 10. Solution Kit: Home Edition |

Agenda

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Welcome | (2 min) |
| 2. Reflect on Apply It and Try It | (10 min) |
| a. Activity 1: Affirmations | (3 min) |
| 3. Teach Me What to Do! | |
| a. The Why and When | (4 min) |
| b. The What and the How | (6 min) |
| i. Emotional Literacy | (14 min) |
| • Activity 2: Teaching Emotions | (10 min) |
| ii. Controlling Anger and Handling Disappointment | (24 min) |
| iii. Problem Solving | (21 min) |
| d. Activity 3: Apply It and Try It | (15 min) |
| 4. Closing | (2 min) |

Facilitator Materials

- ▶ Ground Rules from Session 1
- ▶ Chart Paper, Markers, Tape
- ▶ PowerPoint
- ▶ Positive Solutions Family Handbook
- ▶ Facilitator set: Feeling Faces, Feeling Wheel, This is How I Feel Today board, *Tucker the Turtle Takes Time to Tuck and Think at Home*, Self-Regulation Skills: Breathing Strategies, Problem Solving Poster, *We Can Be Problem Solvers at Home*, and Solution Kit: Home Edition

Icon Key



Chart Paper



Role Play



Group Activity



Discussion



Family Handbook



Apply It and Try It

Welcome

Post “Ground Rules” developed in the first session.



Show Slide 1: Positive Solutions for Families – Teach Me What to Do!

Welcome back to our fifth *Positive Solutions for Families* Session. Today our focus will be on teaching new skills to our children.



Show Slide 2: What's Happening Today?

We have some interesting topics to cover and lots of resources and ideas to share with you.

We will learn how to:

- ▶ Identify the best time for teaching of social and emotional skills.
- ▶ Identify feeling words and ways to teach how to identify emotions.
- ▶ Identify how the use of calming strategies can be used to cope with feelings and teach self-regulation skills.
- ▶ Learn how to teach problem-solving skills.

This list might seem like a lot, but you will leave with a plan today for trying a few things and seeing how they work for you and your child.



Show Slide 3: Apply It and Try It Reflection

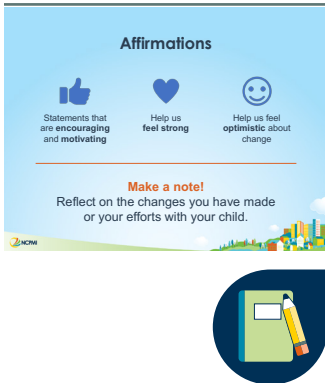
We are going to start by sharing how the routine you selected to work on last week went. The goal was to identify a routine and try out some of the ideas we talked through... it might have been a visual schedule, a transition strategy like the use of a timer, or the first/then board. Does anyone want to share what they did and how it went?

Allow time for a few participants to share. Use potential follow up questions as needed:

- ▶ How did you feel about trying the strategies?
- ▶ How did your child respond?
- ▶ Was any part of this challenging?

Summarize after sharing. You might say, “A few of you tried establishing new routines and some of you made a visual schedule. Think of all the prevention strategies we have discussed...using a visual schedule, providing choices, providing positive directions, and establishing expectations. Hopefully, you are feeling good about your ability to prevent challenging behavior.”

Activity 1: Affirmations



Show Slide 4: Affirmations

I want you to take a moment and think about the hard work and effort you are putting in at home. Turn to Session 5, **Activity 1** in your Family Handbook. You can use this space to write down an affirmation about what you accomplished last week or use this time to think of those affirmations.

Allow 2 minutes for families to write a quick response. If there is time, you could invite a few participants to share what they wrote as their affirmation.

The Why and When



Show Slide 5: This is When We Teach

Today we will focus on the importance of teaching social and emotional skills. We talked about all the ways that challenging behavior might be sending a message or communicating something to us. What if we could teach children new skills, skills that might replace challenging behavior? What if instead of a tantrum we could teach children to use calming skills? What if instead of yelling we could teach children to tell us they are angry? We can teach these important social and emotional skills. The more we teach them, the more likely children will use them. This is the “why” for teaching social and emotional skills.

First, we are going to talk about “when” during the day we might teach these skills. We talked a little bit about teachable moments in Session 3 when we discussed when to teach household rules. Think about how hard it is to teach your child something new when they are upset or mad. This might not be the best time to teach social and emotional skills.

Think about this challenging moment:

Marc is busy cooking dinner while his two younger children, Elijah and Eva, are playing nearby with a set of blocks and toy cars. Elijah, the younger child, approaches Eva and grabs a toy car out of her hand. Eva starts yelling and hits Elijah in the arm. Elijah starts yelling and screaming. Upon hearing the screaming, Marc runs into the living room.

Let’s think about how we most often respond in this moment. What do you think Marc is going to do? What will he say to his children?

Ask participants to generate ideas about what they might say to their children if they were in this situation (possible ideas generated might be: “Use your words.”; “Say you’re sorry.”; “Ask nicely if you want something.”; “Stop screaming.”; “Calm down.”).

Point to the red arrow on the screen. This is often the crisis point where we try to teach new skills. While this might be a time that you think it is important to teach

and could be a good lesson, this might not be the most effective teaching moment. Think back to Marc and the moment with Elijah and Eva:

- ▶ The incident has already happened.
- ▶ Both children are upset.
- ▶ Eva might do this again (“Wow, I might do this again so I can get my dad’s attention.”).

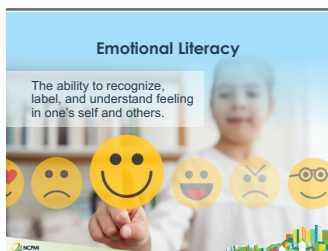
Luckily, there are effective teachable moments (*Point to the green arrows*). The main point here is that you want to make sure that these “crisis moments” are not the only time that you are “teaching” social skills. Social skills can be embedded into almost any part of your daily routine. You want to practice skills during times when children are calm and are more ready to learn a new skill. This could be *before* or *after* the challenging behavior (*just not during* the challenging behavior).

You can prompt your child with those skills before they reach anger, frustration, or use a challenging behavior (*Point to the orange arrow*). Thinking about Marc, he could provide a verbal prompt to his youngest child, “Remember, if you want to use a car your sister has, how can you ask her?” There are lots of different skills that Marco might help his children learn, like how to get someone’s attention, how to share, or how to request a toy. Let’s take a moment to look at some of our family materials. In your resources you should have a few helpful handouts on teaching your child important social skills, including *How to Help Your Child Learn to Share* and *How to Teach Your Child to Appropriately Get Your Attention*.



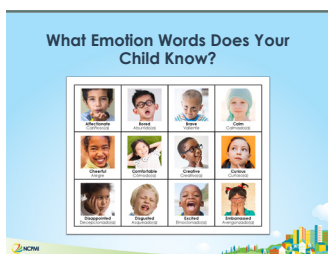
Now that we have discussed the “why” and the “when” to teach, we will talk about the “what” and the “how” to teach. We will start with teaching emotions.

The What and the How



Show Slide 6: Emotional Literacy

Young children can have some pretty big emotions. One of the things we can do to help children manage their emotions is to help them identify feelings. Children learn emotions just like they learn their ABCs, colors, or numbers. We can teach emotional literacy, which is the ability to recognize, label, and understand feelings in one’s self and others. It is a foundational skill for children to be able to control their emotions, develop relationships, interact with others, and become effective problem solvers.



Show Slide 7: What Emotion Words Does Your Child Know?

For children to become effective at controlling their emotions, they need the *words* to describe their own and other’s emotions. When young children are asked how they are feeling, they often respond with “good or bad” and don’t have a way to express the subtle emotions in between. The best thing we can do for young children is to give them the names of feelings, so they can begin to understand their feelings and the feelings of others. We can teach happy, but we can also talk about excited, glad, proud,

silly, and loved. You can also help them understand that their feelings can change. They may wake up grumpy, but they don't have to stay grumpy all day. You can help them learn that they can have more than one feeling about something. They can feel differently than someone else about the same thing. And all feelings are valid. It's what we do with them that counts!

You can help your child learn about emotions by talking about feeling words in everyday life. Teach a range of emotions-not just the positive emotions or the more negative emotions. You can talk about emotions and label your own emotions, and your child's emotions as they happen throughout day. You might say to your child, "You look surprised; your mouth is open and your eyes are wide. What happened? What surprised you?" You can also describe your feelings – "I feel sad. It makes me happy when Grandma visits, but I feel sad when she leaves. I miss her!"



Show Slide 8: Feeling Faces

Just like using visuals for teaching rules and schedules, feeling faces are visual ways to teach feeling words. Children can see how "faces" look when they feel these emotions. You have a set of **Feeling Faces** included in your resources. Let's take some to look at these together. *(Note: Have a set of feeling face cards for you to demonstrate and show families how to use).* There are lots of interesting ways you can use the feeling faces to teach children about emotions. One game that children love to play is a little bit like charades. You select a feeling face and act out the emotion using exaggerated facial expressions and gestures. The other players guess the emotion. Simple, yet fun to play.

Another game to play with your child is "Mirror, Mirror...what do I see?". Using a hand mirror or a mirror on the wall, play this game with your child. Look in the mirror and say "Mirror, mirror, what do I see?" Then make an emotion face. Follow by naming the emotion by saying, "I see a sad Mommy looking at me." Turn to your child and say, "your turn." Help your child remember the phrase "Mirror, mirror what do I see?" Then, tell your child to make a face and help him say the next sentence "I see a happy Patrick looking at me." Don't be surprised if your child always wants to use the emotion that you just demonstrated. Play the game until your child loses interest.



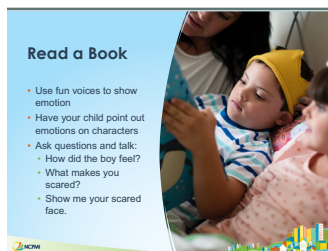
Show Slide 9: This is How I Feel Today

One last way to use the feeling faces is to have children do emotional check-ins at home. Check-ins are great for helping children learn that feelings can change over the course of the day, and that is ok. Doing a check-in is also something that all family members can do. You can see there a few options you can use for a feelings check-in. You have *feeling check-in* materials included in your family resources.

Refer participants to slide that shows the Feeling Wheel and the This is How I Feel Today board. Demonstrate how to use with your copies).

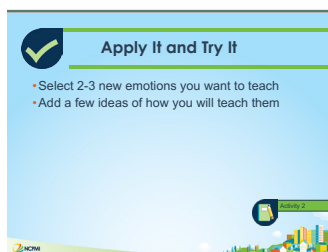
I am sure as you use the feeling faces at home, you will think of your own fun ways to use the cards.

Note to Facilitator: You could print the faces (one copy for each family) in color.



Show Slide 10: Read a Book

Books are an excellent way to teach feeling words. While reading, ask your child questions about emotions and point out things about the pictures. For example, after reading that a character was scared, you might ask, “What makes you scared? Show me your scared face? What does your body do when you are scared? What does it feel like? Can you tell me about a time when you felt scared?” It is important to engage your child when you read books together. You can do this by using fun voices, encouraging your child to point out pictures, make sounds or sing songs related to the book, and by asking children to help read or tell the story. *(Note: have a few books to illustrate how to use children’s literature to teach feeling words).*



Show Slide 11: Apply It and Try It

For your first Apply It and Try It activity, you are going to spend a few minutes developing a plan to try teaching emotions. Let’s turn in your Family Handbook to **Activity 2**. First, you will select 2-3 new emotions you want to teach your child. Think about the emotion words your child already has in their vocabulary, and use the feeling faces to think of the emotions that would be helpful for your child to learn. For example, if your child only uses the words happy and mad when talking about emotions, perhaps you want to teach excited, sad, and tired. Then add a few ideas of how you will teach those new feelings to your child. There is a place in your Family Handbook for you to write this down.

Allow 2 minutes for participants to select emotions and record ideas into their handbook. Ask a few participants to do a share back. You might say, “Who would like to share the emotions they selected and one strategy you thought would be fun to try at home with your child?” Summarize responses. If participants cannot think of a strategy, offer the following ideas from the content you just reviewed: games, books, using feeling face cards and mirrors, labeling and demonstrations of emotions, etc.

Controlling Anger and Handling Disappointment



Show Slide 12: Self-Regulation and Anger Management

An important skill to teach children is how to manage their strong emotions, emotions like anger, frustration, or disappointment. Helping children learn to **recognize** and name their own emotions and feelings is an important step for children in learning how to control or self-regulate their emotions. A child must **recognize** how they are feeling before they can learn how to control that emotion. Having a label for what a child feels helps the child express the feeling (“I’m mad” or “I’m frustrated”) instead of using a challenging behavior.

Have you ever told your child to calm down and they just kept doing what they were doing? Ever wonder why? Young children are often told to “calm down” – but what does that really mean? We want to make sure that the child **understands** what we are asking them to do. Remember when we talked about being clear about our directions.

How can they be successful at responding if they do not know what we are asking? What we mean by “calm down”?

Children experience strong emotions in different ways—just as we do. Our own life experiences have taught most of us to cool down, get help, or walk away when we experience strong emotions. Let’s hear from you how you manage to cope when you are really upset—what are things you do to calm down? *(Allow time for participants to share and then summarize responses)*. You described the different ways you calm down when you are angry or upset. But young children have not yet mastered these calming down skills yet.



Show Slide 13: Turtle Technique

This strategy was originally developed to teach adults anger management skills, but it is also great for helping children learn how to calm down. It’s called the “turtle technique.” Here’s how you can teach your child about how the turtle uses his shell to help him calm down.

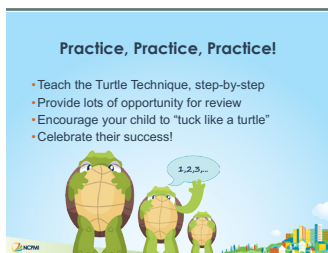
The basic steps of the turtle technique are *(you might want to have the steps written on chart paper so everyone can see the steps or hang the posters with the steps around the room)*:

- Step 1:** Recognize your feelings.
- Step 2:** Stop your body.
- Step 3:** Tuck inside your shell and take three deep breaths.
- Step 4:** Come out when you are calm and think of a solution.

You can help your child practice the turtle technique with you by pretending to go into your shells together and taking three deep breaths.

One way to teach your child to “tuck like a turtle” is by reading the *Tucker Turtle Takes Time to Think at Home* scripted story. We have included this story for you in your resources. Take a moment to find the story and we will look at it as a group. We also have included the poster of steps you could use at home. Let’s go through the story.

Read the story. Point out that they have the Tucker Turtle story in their set of materials.



Show Slide 14: Practice, Practice, Practice!

If you want your child to learn to use the turtle technique, you need to teach the skill *step-by-step*, providing many opportunities for review and practice, practice, practice. Encourage your child to “tuck like a turtle” and celebrate your child’s successes. You may want to show your child that you can use the turtle technique too. For example, you might do the following: “I am so angry that the dishwasher is broken. I am going to go in my shell and take three deep breaths. One. Two. Three. I feel better now. I think I know what to do. I can see if there is a YouTube video on how to fix the dishwasher or go to the user’s manual. Or I can wash the dishes by hand in the sink until the dishwasher gets fixed. What do you think I should do?”



Show Slide 15: Belly Breathing

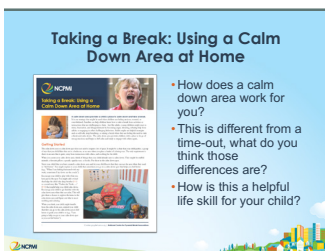
As part of the step-by-step process to teaching the turtle technique, you might have to teach your child how to take calming, deep breaths. You may also have heard the term “belly breathing” before. Belly breathing or those big deep breaths, reduce heart rate and trigger a relaxation response. It slows us down. There are tips in your resources, including the poster you see here on the slide, for helping children take deep breaths. Ideas include using phrases like “smell the flower, blow the pinwheel” are helpful.



Slide 16: Not Just for Anger!

Tucker the Turtle, along with deep breathing, are two ways to help children learn self-regulation skills. And it is not just for anger. We can also help our children practice ways to handle the big emotions that come along with being excited or disappointed before a potentially disappointing incident occurs. For example, you know that your child will be disappointed if someone else is on their favorite swing at the playground. Before you leave for the playground you could say, “When we go to playground, someone else might be on your favorite swing. And you might feel disappointed. What could you do to stay calm?” You could remind your child to tuck like a turtle and think of some solutions such as asking for a turn, saying “please,” or finding something else to do while the other child is on the swing.

There are many other ways you can model and teach calming strategies to children. We are going to review a few additional strategies that might be useful for teaching additional calming and self-regulation skills.

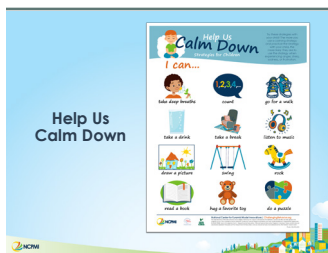


Show Slide 17: Taking a Break: Using a Calm Down Area at Home

A calm down area provides a child a place to calm down and take a break. It is one strategy that might be used when children are feeling anxious, stressed, or overwhelmed. You can help children learn how to take a break from activities or interactions that are challenging to them. You have a resource in your materials, *Taking a Break: Using a Calm Down Area at Home*, that has tips on how to develop and use a calm down area.

- ▶ Has anyone used calm down strategies like these?
- ▶ How does it work for you?
- ▶ This is different from a time-out, what do you think those differences are?
- ▶ How is this a helpful life skill for your child?

Allow time for participants to respond to questions and reflect as a group. Summarize responses.



Show Slide 18: Help Us Calm Down

The more you model and use calming strategies that assist in self-regulation, the more likely your child may use the strategies when they are upset, frustrated, or angry. Sometimes children and the adults (us) need ideas of how to calm down. The next resource I want to share with you is a poster that contains a list of activities your child can do that are easy to use in the moment. Your child will need practice using these calm down ideas, so that when they do get upset, they will know how to use them, things like counting, drawing a picture, hugging a favorite toy, or doing a puzzle.

Before moving to Problem Solving, allow participants the opportunity to reflect:

- ▶ Does anyone have any questions about ways to help your child learn about emotions or with self-regulation?
- ▶ Does anyone want to share an idea that you have used to help your child calm down that we have not discussed or shared?

Allow time for participants to respond to questions and reflect as a group. Summarize responses.

Problem Solving



Show Slide 19: Problem Solving

When we read through the turtle technique steps, you might have noticed that one important step is being able to problem solve and think of solutions. What are some of the problems that your children have at home?

Allow time for participants to share. If they need ideas, share common ideas, such as children arguing over same toy, child getting hurt, child wanting someone to play with them while everyone is busy, etc. Summarize responses.

You all identified some of the problems that children experience. Many children solve their problems by using challenging behaviors (hitting, shouting, running away from the problem). However, even very young children can be taught more effective and appropriate ways to solve problems. One way that children learn problem solving strategies is by watching the adults around them during times of conflict. This is important to consider; think about how you last resolved a conflict or situation in your life recently. What strategies did your child observe? Calm negotiation and conversation or sarcasm and screaming? If young children can observe adults effectively and appropriately resolving conflicts or solving problems, they learn a tremendous amount about positive problem solving. We can demonstrate problem solving by talking out loud or using self-talk.

Here is an example of an adult's self-talk: "Uh-oh the car won't start, and we need to get you to school. How can I solve this? I need to stop and think. Okay, I need to think of some solutions. I could call Aunt Mia and see if she can take you to school. We could call an Uber. I could ask our neighbor for a jump start."



Show Slide 20: Problem Solving Steps

This example is showing the problem-solving steps. You can follow along in your materials where you will find a poster you can use at home.

One way to help children learn to problem solve is to use these 4 steps:

- Step 1:** What is my problem? (Define the problem).
- Step 2:** Think, think, think of some solutions (Generate multiple solutions).
- Step 3:** What would happen if I tried my solution? (Evaluating consequences – Would it be safe? How would everyone feel?).
- Step 4:** Give it a try! If my solution didn't work, I might have to think of another solution.

You can start using the problem-solving steps for all sorts of things. You can help your children with the first step by identifying problems around the home. “We only have one apple, but we have 3 family members who want an apple for a snack. It looks like we have a problem. What should we do?” or “We have four chairs at our table, but grandpa is coming over for dinner. Seems like we have a problem here. Who has a solution?”



Show Slide 21: I Can Be a Problem Solver at Home

Within your materials, you have a scripted story for Problem Solving called *We Can Be Problem Solvers at Home*. Not only is there a story that you can read to your child, but there is a set of practice problem scenario cards. There are a few of the scenario cards on the slide – looks like some of these were the problems mentioned when we talked about problems our own children have. Use these cards as “practice” – you can help children anticipate situations that might present a problem (*select a scenario card and demonstrate how it might be used*).

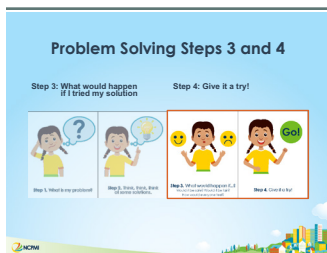


Show Slide 22: Home Solution Kit

Once children can identify their problems, the second step is to think of solutions. As we have talked about the problems children encounter, you might be thinking of the solutions your child has used in the past, or solutions you have already taught. If you need ideas for solutions, you can use the *Solution Kit: Home Edition*. These cards contain solutions you can teach your child to help solve problems. You have a copy of the solution cards within your materials.

Let's take a look at these solutions. Are any of these solutions familiar to you—are you using any of these in your home? Are any of these new solutions—maybe ones that you are excited to teach your child? (*Allow time for participants to review solution cards and time for discussion*).

Using both the scenario cards and solution cards, you can help children practice problem solving. Encourage your child to come up with as many different solutions as possible. It is important to not criticize the solution your child gives. Your child is brainstorming. This will help your child think of solutions the next time a similar situation happens.



Show Slide 23: Problem Solving Steps 3 and 4

Once your child can think of solutions, the next step is to help them think about consequences so that they can make the best choices. Guide your child to consider these two questions:

1. Would it be safe?
2. How would everyone feel?

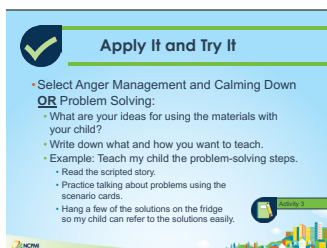
Let's think about the apple example. Your child might suggest cutting up an apple is one solution. You can help children think if their solution of cutting the apples up and sharing with all 3 family members is safe and you could ask your child how everyone would feel if they each got to have some apples. You can "role play" the best solution. This can be a lot of fun if you and your child act or use props (e.g., dolls, stuffed animals, action figures). The last step is to try the solution out. You will also want to help your child to determine if the solution worked. If the child's solution did not work, they might have to think of another solution. After you cut up the apple and share among family members, you might say something like, "Our solution was to cut up the apple and share. What do we think? Looks like we are all happy eating our apple slices. Way to be a problem solver!"



Show Slide 24: Setting the Stage for Success

A great way to teach your child problem solving is to teach the skill when your child is facing or about to face a real problem or difficult situation. To do that, you should look for or anticipate situations that might present a problem. For example, if you know that your child always gets upset if there is someone playing with their favorite toy at school, you could say to your child, "Sometimes when we go to preschool there is another child playing with your favorite toy and you get upset. What could you do if that happens today? Let's think of some solutions?" In anticipation that your child might grab the toy, you can say, "If you want to play with the toy, remember the way to ask."

To teach problem solving in the moment, you have to be nearby and ready to help your child when a problem is about to occur. You will be able to support your child in identifying if there is a problem and help them think of a solution. When your child problem solves, be sure to give them encouragement and positive comments just like we talked about in our first session.



Show Slide 25: Apply It and Try It

We are going to spend the last part of our time working in two groups, depending on how you want to focus your energy before our next session. Are you interested in a) anger management and calming down **OR** b) problem solving? You know your child best. What would be most helpful?

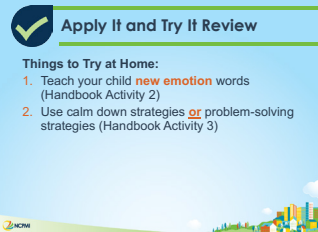
- ▶ Once you are in your groups, use the materials we have talked about today.
- ▶ Discuss your ideas with other group members.



- ▶ Take a few notes. Write down what you want to teach and a few ways to teach it. For example, if you want to teach the problem-solving steps, you might have this written down:
 - Teach my child the problem-solving steps. Read the scripted story. Practice talking about problems using the scenario cards. Hang a few of the solutions on the fridge so my child can refer to the solutions easily.
- ▶ You will have 15 minutes to discuss and share ideas. Make sure you capture your ideas on the Apply It and Try it page in your Handbook. This is so you can refer to your ideas once you are at home.

Walk around and offer your support as participants work and share their ideas. Allow 15 minutes for families to look at the materials and develop ideas. You could also share examples of home “solution kits” or “calm down kits” families can browse while they are brainstorming.

Closing



Show Slide 26: Things to Try at Home: Apply it and Try It Review

It seems like everyone has put together a list of ideas they are wanting to try at home this week. We covered a lot of ground in a short amount of time today-the teaching of emotions, self-regulation and anger management, and problem solving. By teaching these skills, you are supporting your child’s social-emotional development and preventing challenging behavior. There are two Apply It and Try It activities for this week. The first one is to teach your child a few new emotion words. The second is to use the calm down strategies, like Tucker the Turtle, or use the problem-solving strategies, like the family solution kit. Hopefully, you have a plan for how you want to begin teaching your child some of these new skills.

We only have two more sessions. During the next session, we will be exploring ways to respond to behavior. That will get us ready for the very last session where we “put it all together” in a behavior plan for you to assist your child. I look forward to seeing you at our next *Positive Solutions for Families* session.