



POWER OF PLAY

Play, Have Fun, Learn!

University of California Santa Barbara & Isla Vista Elementary School Collaborative Partnership



IDEAL Problem Solving Steps

How to solve problems

STOP Create a context to solve problems:
Stop – Breathe – Cool Down

Allow each person to speak without interrupting or calling names
Focus on IDEAL Problem Solving Steps



1) Identify the Problem

-What is the problem?
(Each person should take a turn to describe the problem and share their feelings, and the other person can then repeat what they heard)



2) Define Your Goals

-What do you want to happen?



3) Explore Possible Solutions

-What are some solutions?
-Which is the best solution?
-Is it safe?
-How might people feel about it?
-Is it fair?
-Will it work?



4) Action

-Choose and Use a Solution

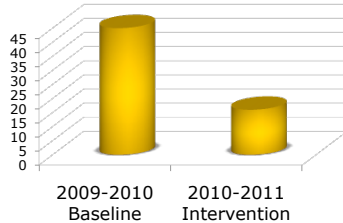


5) Learn from your actions

-Is it working? (if not, then go through process again)
-What will you do the next time the situation occurs?



Office Referrals



Core Components

The **POWER OF PLAY** project aims to promote positive peer relations through facilitating prosocial behaviors during recess, with two primary components:

1. Create an environment of engaging play activities to reduce the frequency of problematic behaviors.
2. Facilitate problem solving and conflict resolution using the IDEAL Problem Solving Steps (Bransford & Stein, 1993).

Children share how much fun they have playing with the playground specialists at recess, especially, soccer, tennis, basketball, drawing, coloring, and origami.



Teachers report that students return from recess ready to learn, having enjoyed their recess and resolving most conflicts that may arise during recess.

To accomplish the first component, playground specialists create opportunities for children to play engaging games such as soccer, kickball, basketball, tennis, jump rope, handball, scooters, block building, and chalk drawing. Facilitating activities and offering ideas for games aims to decrease the likelihood that the children engage in problematic behaviors due to boredom or unintended escalation of other physical games.

Yard Duty staff report that the students are much more active and dispersed during recess, thus, there are fewer problems and children are safer.



Parents describe that their children have shared how much they enjoy playing tennis, golf, soccer, origami, and many other fun activities at recess.

The second component is to facilitate the development of basic problem solving skills when conflicts do arise. The IDEAL problem solving approach is a five-step process to promote conflict resolution. When a conflict arises, the playground specialists facilitate the IDEAL problem solving steps with the children to prevent the conflict from escalating and also to provide an opportunity for children to work through the conflict themselves. In this way, the children involved in conflicts most frequently will also have the most exposure to this problem solving approach, which has resulted in both a reduction in office referrals and also the acquisition of basic problem solving skills among children who will benefit the most from them.

Results reveal that the presence of playground specialists facilitating structured play activities and using problem solving strategies with children during recess reduces problem behaviors (-65%) and promotes prosocial engagement (+78%).

Questions or comments, please contact
Dr. Shane Jimerson - jimerson@education.ucsb.edu

Playground Specialists

Playground Specialist are students from UCSB involved with the **POWER OF PLAY** project at Isla Vista Elementary School. Responsibilities include: engaging activities with first-six grade students during recesses at IVES, facilitating problem solving strategies to support conflict resolution, weekly participation in the online discussion forum, completion of a literature review, and participation in the weekly research team meetings at IVES where theory, research, and practical strategies are discussed.

Professor Jimerson and UCSB school psychology graduate students select, prepare, and supervise approximately 50 undergraduate playground specialists (5-9 present at each recess every day), collectively contributing over 5,000 hours each academic year.



Prosocial Engagement

