

Parenting for Success Class #10

Problem Solving



Introduction

The SODAS Method

No matter what their age, kids are making decisions all the time. Children and teens frequently make decisions on the spur of the moment, sometimes without thinking. They tend to look at solutions to problems as black or white, all or nothing, yes or no. Kids also focus on the situation at hand and have difficulty looking ahead to see how a decision could affect them later.



Introduction

The SODAS method accomplished two goals:

- It gives parents and children a process for solving problems and making decisions together.
- It helps parents teach children how to solve a problem and make decisions on their own.

SODAS stands for:

- Situation
- Options
- Disadvantages
- Advantages
- Solution

SODAS: Situation

Before you can solve a problem, you need to know what the problem is. Defining the situation can sometimes take the greatest amount of time because children often use vague or emotional descriptions.

Tips for identifying the situation:

- Ask your child specific, open-ended questions.
- Teach children to focus on the entire situation, not just part of it.
- Summarize the information to confirm that you understand what your child is trying to tell you.



SODAS: Options

As adults, we know that there are usually several options to each problem. Your role as a parent is to get your child to think and evaluate each of these options. It is common for kids to only see one solution to a problem or to take the first one that pops into their heads. Other times, they may see no options at all.

Tips for identifying options:

- Let your child list both good and bad options.
- Limit the options to four or less.
- Suggest options if your child is having trouble coming up with them.



SODAS: Disadvantages & Advantages

Help your child look at the pros and cons of each option. This helps your child see the connection between each option and what could happen if that option is chosen.

Tips for reviewing disadvantages and advantages:

- Ask your child for his or her thoughts about each option.
- Help your child come up with both disadvantages and advantages for each option.



SODAS: Solution

Quickly summarize the disadvantages of each option. This reinforces the connection between each option and what could happen if that option is chosen.

Tips for choosing a solution:

- Make sure that your child knows the options and the possible outcomes of each one.
- Recognize that some decisions are hard to make. Let your child know this, and encourage them along the way.



But What if...?

Sometimes kids pick solutions that we, as parents, may not agree with. In general, if the decisions won't hurt anyone, aren't illegal or aren't contrary to your moral or religious beliefs, then let them make the choice and learn from the consequences. After all, we want to encourage kids to make decisions on their own.

However, we also need to let our children know that we'll be there to help at any time.



Consequences

Make sure you let your children know that they will earn additional consequences if they choose a solution that is illegal, immoral or that will cause harm to others. Follow through with predetermined consequences.



Follow-up

It can be helpful to practice putting the decision into effect. The purpose of practice is to help your child feel confident about the solution they have chosen. You can do this by role playing with your child.

Check back with your child to see how the solution worked. This is an excellent opportunity to revisit the problem solving process with your child, as well as a great opportunity to praise your child for following through with the decision.



Conclusion

The SODAS Method provides an excellent framework for your children to more carefully evaluate their decisions. By offering your insights into this process, you are becoming their ally while simultaneously encouraging them to become more independent.



Next Class

Now that we've completed classes 1-10, we've learned the basics of how we can manage our children's behaviors. In class #11, we'll put the pieces together and learn how we can incorporate all of these components into our own cohesive parenting style.



Thank you!

We hope this class was useful to you.

For more free parenting resources, including additional classes in this series, please visit:

www.youthvillage.org

