



Problem Solving

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Duration (45 minutes)

Core Competencies Targeted:	Attachment/Trust Respect Empathy	
Objective:	Help children understand that everyone has problems, including dogs, and with patience and persistence we can find ways to solve them. And let them know that it is ok to ask for help.	
Materials:	A problem for the dog...I use a treat ball filled with treats that the dog must throw or push around the room to make the treats fall out.	
	Activity:	Ask the children to take turns putting treats into the treat ball while the dog watches. They will usually ask how she will get them out. Explain that is a problem, isn't it? What will she do? What would you do?
	Procedure/Discussion	Once the dog has the ball, she will roll it around the room and toss it, much to the children's delight. While this is going on, explain that when she first got the ball, the dog didn't know what to do and it took a lot of time and patience for her to figure it out.
	Dog Interaction Activity	After the dog successfully solves the problem, give the children an opportunity to come up and pet and brush her and tell her what a good job she did. Point out that she didn't yell or scream or throw a tantrum, she just kept working at it and didn't give up. They will often share their problem-solving issues as well.
	Post-Discussion: Closure Activity	Tell them that since the dog worked so hard for those treats, we are going to reward her with some extras that are not so much work. Give each child a treat, to hold in their hand "like a plate" and let the dog take the treats from their hands.