



Problem Solving Strategy Tip Sheet

Presented by: Despina Small, OTS
Mary Baldwin University: Murphy Deming College of Health Sciences

Assess Yourself

- Consider your own personal abilities.
- Determine what parenting tasks/activities that are meaningful for you to complete.
- Choose products that you feel are essential for your needs in order to be successful in completing the parenting task (e.g., if have back problems choose a crib that requires a minimal amount of bending to pick up a child)

Assess the Environment

- Look at the floor space in your home to accommodate:
 - Baby products (e.g., high chairs, cribs, or Pack-N-Play)
 - Mobility devices and adaptive equipment (e.g., wheelchair, tub bench, etc).
- Location for Use and Storage
 - Place products within easy reach (e.g., placing baby bath onto a counter to easily reach child).
 - Consider storage space (e.g., placing baby products on low shelving/folded in closets)

Problem Solve:

- Ways to Manipulate Objects:
 - Practice using other body parts.
 - Use torso as an anchor (e.g., twisting, pulling with body force to take bottle caps off).
 - Use mouth/teeth to manipulate smaller items: (e.g., to pull diaper tab open may need to use mouth if have limited dexterity).
 - Consider the shape or size of buttons (e.g. larger buttons are easier to manipulate)
 - Use adaptive tools (e.g., car seat support to unbuckle the seat, to hold bottles that have a loop to make it easier to transport).
- Body Mechanics
 - Consider how to position yourself before lifting, bending, or reaching for child or product in high and low places.
 - Approach a product or the child facing forward or to the side (e.g., turn yourself or baby in different directions to make it easier to reach child).
 - Use adaptive equipment: (e.g., a blanket with handles to help transport child to and from the sleeper swing).
- Visual/Auditory/Tactile Considerations:
 - Look for products that have:
 - Contrasting colors (e.g., identify specific levers/handles on product)
 - Visual graphics (e.g., arrows, numbering system, color coding to adjust products)
 - Timers for auditory cues (e.g., ring/ beep to signal bottle is warm)
 - Tactile cues (e.g., adjusting high chair height, you'll hear and feel product click into place)
 - Consider adapting products that do not have these features (e.g., apply different textures to the recline settings on a car seat to differentiate the settings).

How to advocate for yourself?

- 1) Identify what tasks/occupations are most meaningful to you.
- 2) Be aware of your limitations.
- 3) Adjust your thoughts and beliefs about seeking assistance.
- 4) Communicate your needs to others.
- 5) Delegate tasks to others.
- 6) Practice time management skills.
- 7) Find a new purpose.
- 8) Take time for yourself.

National organizations and links for additional support

American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA). (2017) <http://www.aota.org/>

Consider online group forums for support systems such as, Facebook (Caregiver/spousal support groups, Mommies on Wheels).

International Society for Augmentative and Alternative Communication (ISAAC).
<https://www.isaac-online.org/english/home/>

Johnson, M. (2008-2017). Meg Johnson Movie Minute video. YouTube Channel shares her story and how she found purpose again in her life. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2Fnvipw7s0>

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