Steps for Problem Solving

1. Work out exactly what the problem is. If it is complex, you may need to break it down so you are only trying to solve one problem at a time.

2. Be clear about whose problem it is. Sometimes what may be a problem for you is not a problem for someone else (e.g. teenagers’ messy bedrooms may suit them fine!)

3. If others are involved, discuss what has already been tried to deal with the problem. Presumably these efforts were not successful, or the problem would not still exist; try to avoid blame and fault-finding.

4. Consider/agree what the goal is - what would solve the problem? This is the crucial step: identifying what would be a solution. Make the goal reasonable and achievable (with children, make it appropriate for their age, too).

5. Think of as many ways as possible to reach the goal. Welcome all ideas at this stage; let children come up with crazy as well as sensible ones.

6. Decide which solutions to try. Pick one or two workable ideas from the list of solutions, and have a go.

7. If the problem remains, go back to the list, check step 1 and step 4 again, and try some other ideas. If none of them works, you may need to try negotiating instead.