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## **Using Kids Puzzles to Encourage Problem-Solving**

**By Chris Peace**

If you ask most employers today what they are looking for in a future employee, problem-solving skills are going to rank high on that list. The question is how do you raise a child that is going to have these skills which are so desirable to employers and which might help your child have a successful future. The answer is to provide your child with the right kinds of kids puzzles starting at an early age.

### **What are Problem-Solving Skills?**

Although the term gets passed around a bit, it is rarely defined. However, problem-solving skills usually refer to a set of cognitive abilities that help us find solutions to the challenges we're facing in life. For example, if you get lost on your way to the airport, that's a problem. If you have good problem-solving skills, your brain is automatically going to start rattling off a list of suggested fixes. If you don't, then you may struggle to get out of the situation.

The best problem-solving skills are also closely linked to creativity. That's because a creative mind can come up with more solutions and more diverse solutions than an uncreative mind. And that's where kids puzzles come into the picture.

### **The Role of Kids Puzzles**

Basically, kids puzzles are designed specifically to make children use their problem-solving skills. Without these skills, a child is not going to be able to use these activities effectively. For example, if a child is playing with lacing cards and can't figure out where to insert the lace next to create the desired design he or she isn't going to be successful.

These kids puzzles can also inspire creativity. For example, building blocks are extremely useful for enforcing and developing problem solving skills. A young builder needs to know how to add new blocks to a construction without making the wobbly thing collapse on the floor. However, the builder also needs a good vision of what he or she wants to create and that requires creativity.

### **Other Benefits of Problem Solving**

Clearly, kids puzzles do have a role in establishing problem-solving abilities even in young children.

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However, those skills are important for more than just securing a future job. For starters, they can help boost your child's confidence and independence. As long as your son or daughter feels they must rely on you to solve even small problems, they are going to be depending on you. They will also feel bad about themselves as they see their peers develop these skills and stretch their wings a bit.

Here kids puzzles can be helpful, too. You could give a child the Tim's Building Machine Book and Game set, for example, and leave them to figure it out alone. When they succeed and you praise them, their confidence will shoot up.

### Reaping the Rewards of Problem-Solving

No matter what career path your child plans on taking, problem-solving skills will be critical. Plus, they are going to make getting through life in one piece a lot more likely. And those are all good reasons for arming children with great kids puzzles.

Smalltime Child offers a great selection of Kids Puzzles, Children's Puzzles, & Puzzles for Kids.&nbsp; Check us out on the web at <http://www.smalltimechild.com>

## Types of Kids Puzzles Available

By Chris Peace

When you hear the phrase “kids puzzles” you may only be thinking about a narrow type of product. However, there are a large number of items which can be classified as kids puzzles because they help young minds begin learning problem solving skills and developing other types of important abilities for their futures. Below are a few examples you may not have thought of before.

### Stacking & Building Activities

When kids are asked to use objects for stacking or building, they are really being asked to complete kids puzzles. Construction is always going to involve problem-solving at some level whether you're playing with blocks or building a skyscraper. For example, you need to know how to support the additions to your construction. If you miscalculate, the entire structure will collapse.

Even something as simple as dominos can be a great example of these activities. Children can find new ways to arrange the small rectangles so that when one tips over the others all fall as well. If just one domino is out of place, the whole effect is ruined.

### Lacing Cards

Don't assume all kids puzzles need a lot of pieces. In fact, lacing cards are a great example of these puzzles but they usually only have two main parts: the laces and the cards. That's why they make great travel activities as well.

The lacing cards work as kids puzzles because children must think about how to place the laces through those holes in order to make the desired design. To an adult, the process may seem simple but to children with less experience this can take trial and error. Remember learning from one's mistakes is also a key to effective problem-solving as an adult.

### Educational Puzzles

Most of us are familiar with education jigsaw puzzles, such as the United States map with each piece representing a different state. It was a great way for school age children to learn geography. However, education kids puzzles can be used with even younger children.

Some of the best are known as pair puzzles. Smalltime Child offers a good example which helps young children learn their alphabet. There are some pieces which depict the letters of the alphabet and others that include pictures of items that start with each letter. Children have to match the correct pieces together. There are also similar puzzles for opposites, rhyming words, baby animals, and even beginning vocabulary.

### The Real Value

Regardless of whether you choose lacing cards, educational puzzles, or building blocks as your preferred kids puzzles, your children will benefit immensely from the time they have playing with these items. Research into language development, problem-solving development, child development, and

many other fields has confirmed that these types of games and activities are only going to make your child's future brighter.

Furthermore, your child will have something to keep him or her mentally and physically engaged while you can carry on what you need to do. Or you can always jump in for some great bonding time.

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