Parents' Power in Play:
Nurturing Children's Virtues, Creativity, Interpersonal Communication, and Problem-Solving Skills

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Objectives of the workshop:

To help parents

- Become their children's guide and playmate

- Prepare and utilize everyday materials

- Employ interactive play techniques to foster strong parent-child relationships and communication

- Understand the importance of play in nurturing children's creativity, problem-solving skills, and character development

In 2022, Google released the **Future of Education** report

- Explore the common challenges brought by global integration
- Explore the AI trends that transform our workplaces
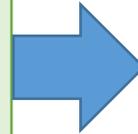
Identified 3 key trends in education:

1. Cultivate students' global problem-solving skills
2. Equip students with the high-demand skills required for work
3. Help students develop a lifelong learning mindset

Source: Future of Education report
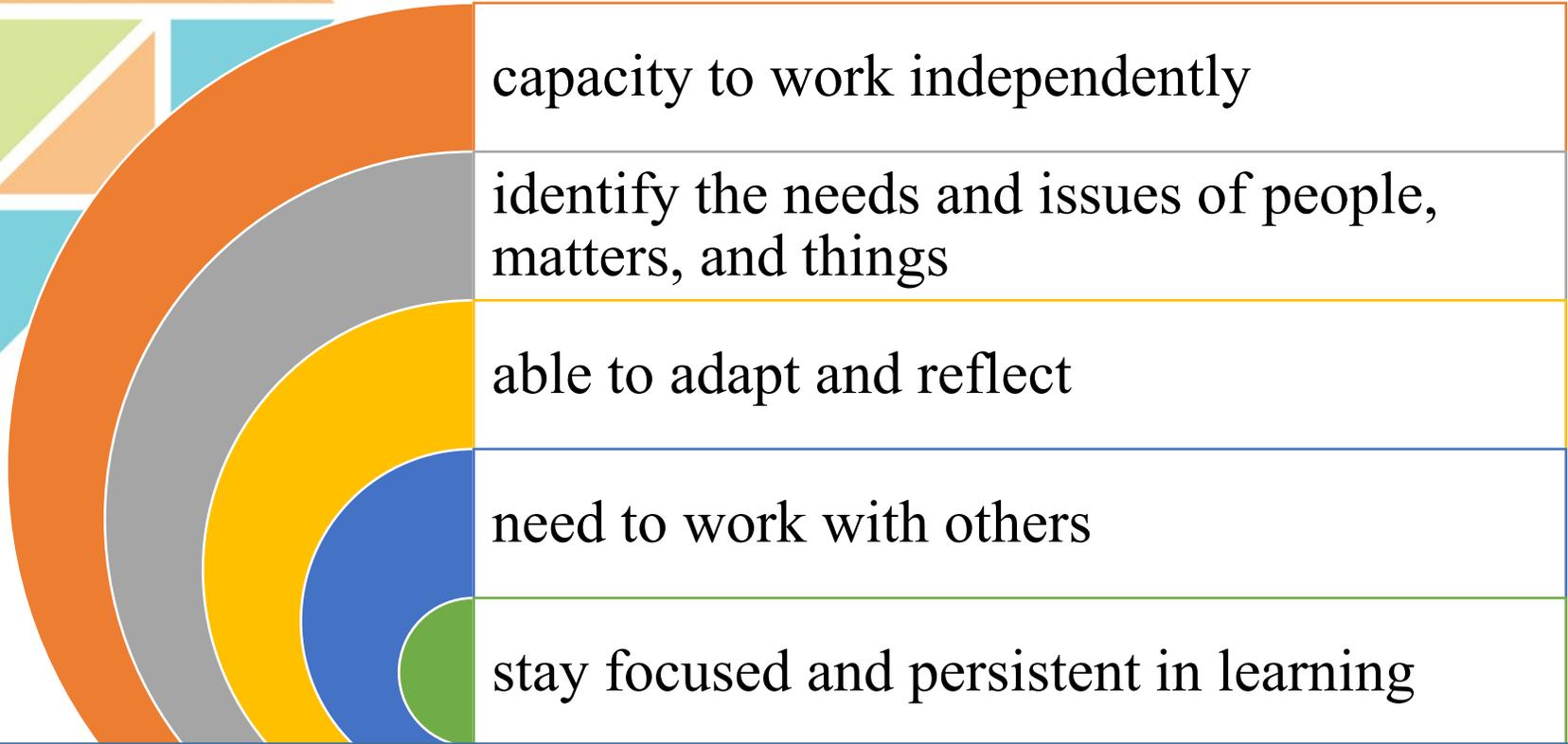https://edu.google.com/future-of-education/

The key trends in education advocated by Google are mainly related to **nurturing multi-skills** in children, which include **thinking, innovation, problem-solving, learning and collaboration**.
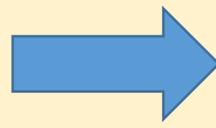
（羅傑瑩，2023；translated version）

Creative Thinking Skills in Problem Solving include:

capacity to work independently
identify the needs and issues of people, matters, and things
able to adapt and reflect
need to work with others
stay focused and persistent in learning

Through this, children's **moral character, creativity, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving skills** can be cultivated.

Cultivating problem-solving skills in young children ➡ Responding to future needs of the society

（羅傑瑩，2023 ；translated version ）

A Proposed Set of Values and Attitudes for Incorporation into the School Curriculum

Core Values: Personal	Sustaining Values: Personal	Core Values: Social	Sustaining Values: Social	Attitudes
◆ sanctity of life ◆ truth ◆ aesthetics ◆ honesty ◆ human dignity ◆ rationality ◆ creativity ◆ courage ◆ liberty ◆ affectivity ◆ individuality	◆ self-esteem ◆ self-reflection ◆ self-discipline ◆ self-cultivation ◆ principled morality ◆ self-determination ◆ openness ◆ independence ◆ enterprise ◆ integrity ◆ simplicity ◆ sensitivity ◆ modesty ◆ perseverance	◆ equality ◆ kindness ◆ benevolence ◆ love ◆ freedom ◆ common good ◆ mutuality ◆ justice ◆ trust ◆ interdependence ◆ sustainability ◆ betterment of human kind ◆ national identity	◆ plurality ◆ due process of law ◆ democracy ◆ freedom and liberty ◆ common will ◆ patriotism ◆ tolerance ◆ equal opportunities ◆ culture and civilisation heritage ◆ human rights and responsibilities ◆ rationality ◆ sense of belonging ◆ solidarity	◆ optimistic ◆ participatory ◆ critical ◆ creative ◆ appreciative ◆ empathetic ◆ caring and concerned ◆ positive ◆ confident ◆ cooperative ◆ responsible ◆ adaptable to changes ◆ open-minded ◆ with a respect for: ⇨ self ⇨ others ⇨ life ⇨ quality and excellence ⇨ evidence ⇨ fair play ⇨ rule of law ⇨ different ways of life, beliefs and opinions ⇨ the environment ◆ with a desire to learn ◆ diligent ◆ committed to core and sustaining values

■Values may be defined as those qualities that an individual or society considers important as principles for conduct and that are intrinsically worthwhile. Values are fundamental to the formation of attitudes, which in turn affect the acquisition and application of the values. They may be broadly categorized as core and sustaining values. An elaboration of these terms is provided below:

"Values constitute the foundation of one's attitudes and beliefs, which subsequently influence one's behaviour and way of life. Values can vary across societies, as different social and economic conditions in different geographical locations may lead to different value emphases. However, across societies, we can also identify certain values that are commonly or universally emphasised. The emergence of these universal values illustrates the common concerns of human societies, the basic qualities for human existence, the common elements in human civilisation, and also the common characteristics of human nature... We call these universal values core values." And sustaining values are "other values that are also important at an instrumental level, being regarded as important or helpful for sustaining the core values."

(Extracted from Learning to Learn: Life-long Learning and Whole-person Development (2001) Appendix II)

Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide (2017)

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Creative Thinking Skills in Problem Solving

Curiosity
- ➢ Identify problems
- ➢ Stay curious when handling and solving the problems

Persistence
- ➢ Keep identifying and exploring solution options

Flexibility
- ➢ Keep the solutions dynamic and innovative
- ➢ Find the optimal solutions based on conditions

Reflection
- ➢ Review, evaluate and reflect on plans continuously

Collaboration
- ➢ Apply collaboration skills in problem-solving
- ➢ Demonstrate communication, acceptance, consensus and understanding of other's needs

(Stone-Mac Donald, Wendell, Douglass, & Love, 2015)

Experiential Activity 1: Free Play

Each group will receive the following items, and children may freely assemble them.
- building blocks

Each group may take additional materials as needed. For example:
- paper cups
- plastic bottles
- plastic containers
- other materials...

Experiential Activity 1: Free Play

Tasks for the parents

On the sidelines…..
- observe
- listen
- ask questions
- provide support

Experiential Activity 1: Free Play

Task One: Observation

Take about five minutes to observe carefully.

What do you notice...?

For example: What are your children assembling? What method are they using? During the assembly process, what surprises you? Do they encounter difficulties? Can they overcome them?

During the process:
- If your child wants you to play together, sit nearby and say, "I'd like to watch how you play, then we can build together."
- If your child seeks help, sit beside them and encourage them: "I'm not sure either. Do you have another idea? Let's see if we can make it work."

  For younger children, you may offer subtle cues through actions or words, such as:
  "Why don't you try switching to a different block / turning the block upside down?"

Task One: Play together

Five minutes later, you may play with your child. You may choose either A or B below.
Both are appropriate, and you may choose freely.

Option A: Build separately

While your child is building, sit nearby and assemble items similar to those for toddlers.

For example: If your child is building a house, you can sit nearby and build a house of a different style.

- If you previously noticed your child struggling with certain aspects of building, you can use this as an opportunity to demonstrate a successful example.   OR
- If you can think of other possible designs or building methods for what your child is constructing, you can build it and show to your child.

During the activity, you can ask your child:

- "Look, we've built different designs. What similarities or differences do you notice?"
- "I think your way of building is great. Could you show me how?"
- "See here—I figured it out! This way, it won't ____ (addressing a tricky part). Would you like to try?"

Option B: Build together

Ask your child, for example:

"Are you building ____? I think it looks fun—can I join you?"

- If your child declines, proceed with Option A: "Build separately."
- If your child agrees to let you join, you may join and ask, for example:
  "Since we're building together, you're working on ____ (a specific part). How about I work on ____ (another part) / Which part would you like me to build?"

During the collaboration, you may ask questions such as:
  "I think the way you're building this is great—could you show me how?"   OR
  "I noticed you just ____ (encountered a difficulty). Let's brainstorm together—what if we try ____? Would that work?"

During the process, you can praise or encourage the child: "I love how you keep trying," "Thanks for letting Dad/Mom join in," "I never thought of doing it that way—you're so clever!"

During/After the activity, praise your child using the following guidelines and share specific examples.

e.g.

Curiosity
➤Identify problems
➤Stay curious when handling and solving the problems

Dive into the game with curiosity

Persistence
➤Keep identifying and exploring solution options

Responsible and never giving up

Flexibility
➤Keep the solutions dynamic and innovative
➤Find the optimal solutions based on conditions

Find a way to accept others' proposals.

Reflection
➤Review, evaluate and reflect on plans continuously

Careful inspection

Collaboration
➤Apply collaboration skills in problem-solving
➤Demonstrate communication, acceptance, consensus and understanding of other's needs

Cooperation
Mutual assistance
Consideration for others

(Stone-Mac Donald, Wendell, Douglass, & Love, 2015)

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After the event concludes, you may refer to the following points to share your thoughts with your children

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Experiential Activity 2:

Role Play

(Scenario-based questions derived from picture book plots)

Experiential Activity 2: Role Play

Tasks for the parents

Together with the children…..
- role-play
- discuss
- attempt

Picture book:
DIE BRÜCKE

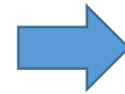Janisch, H. & Bansch, H. (2010). Die Brücke *(The Bridge)*. Wien: Verlag Jungbrunnen.

Janisch, H., Bansch, H.著，侯淑玲主譯 (2012)：《一定要誰讓誰嗎?》(初版)，台北市，大穎文化事業股份有限公司。

Experiential Activity 2: Role Play
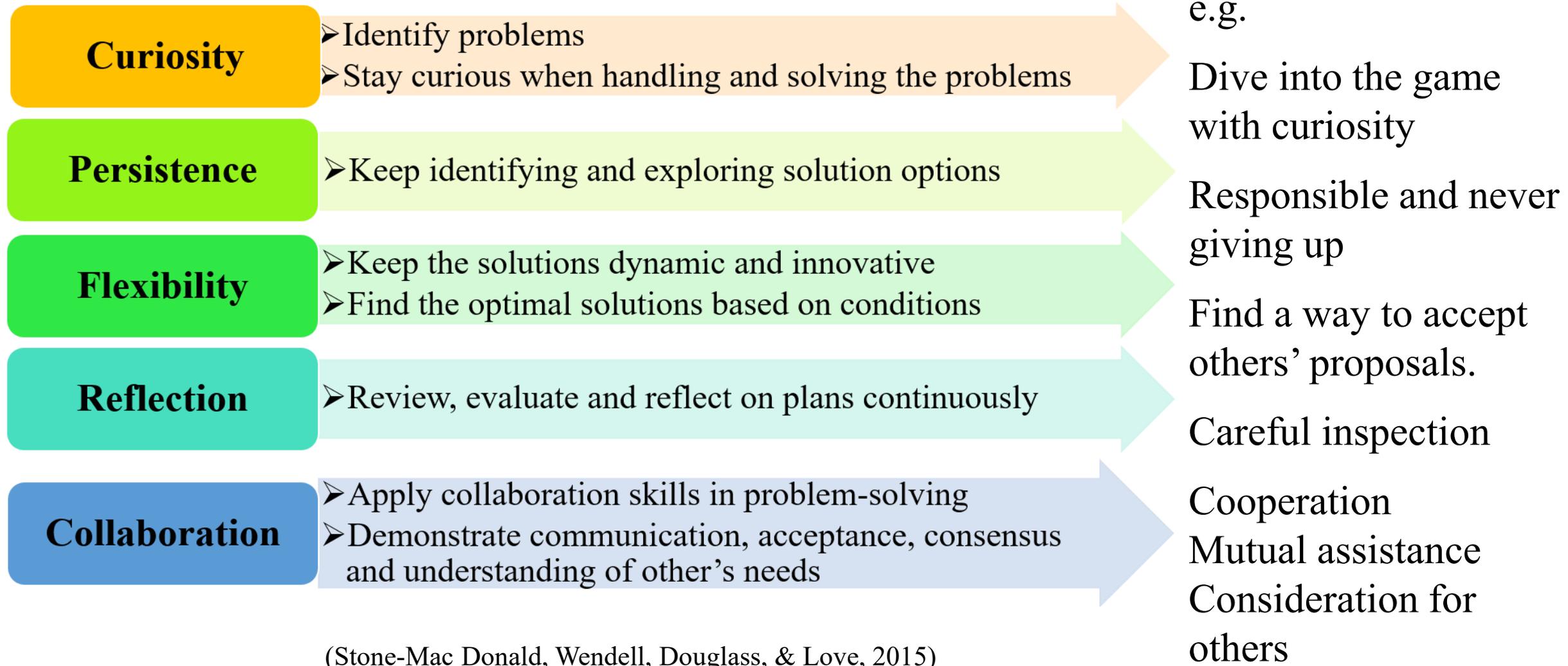
How to cross the river?

Two players may act as:

- a bear and a giant

- an old man/woman with limited mobility, and a child

➡️ Is there a way that both parties can cross the river at the same time?

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Experiential Activity 3:

Constructive Play

(Scenario-based questions derived from picture book plots)

Experiential Activity 3: Constructive Play

Tasks for the parents

Together with the children…..
- discuss
- attempt
- failure
- success

Experiential Activity 3

Story setting:

Current situation

➢ unstable bridge

➢ surrounded by hills of different heights

Issues faced:

People's needs:

➢ many villagers need to cross the river, and some need to drive as well

Janisch, H. & Bansch, H. (2010). Die Brücke *(The Bridge)*. Wien: Verlag Jungbrunnen.

Janisch, H., Bansch, H.著，侯淑玲主譯 (2012)：《 一定要誰讓誰嗎? 》(初版)，台北市，大穎文化事業股份有限公司。

Experiential Activity 3

Use any materials to form 3 hills

Source: Photo taken and provided by speaker

Materials for each group:

Building blocks: 1 box

Clothespins: 10 pieces

Double-sided tape: 1 roll

Scissors: 1 pair

Plastic/paper bowls: 10 pieces

Paper cups: 4 pieces

Colored paper: 3 sheets

Cardboard: 1 sheet

Foam board: 2 pieces

Fuzzy strips: 1 pack

Toy car: 1 piece

When creating the following components, these materials may be provided for children to choose from:

Hills:

- Paper cups
- Plastic bowls / Paper bowls

Important notes: For safety and space consideration, scissors should be used by adults only.

Bridge piers:

- Paper cups
- Plastic bowls / Paper bowls
- Building blocks
- Clothespins

Road/Sidewalk of the bridge:

- Paper cups
- Colored paper
- Cardboard
- Foam board
- Fuzzy strips
- Clothespins

Experiential Activity 3:

Mission: Observe, Support, Listen, Ask Questions

Explain and discuss with your children what needs to be done. For example:
"We're going to build mountains now. We have these materials: ____ and ____. Which material would you choose to make three mountains, tall and short?"

While your child is attempting to assemble something, observe carefully.
For example: What object is your child trying to assemble? What method are they using?
During the assembly process, what aspects surprised you?
Did they encounter difficulties? Were they able to overcome them?

During the process, collaborate with your child to build. For example:
- "Let's build this together. You can assemble the ____ (part), while I'll handle the ____ (other part). / Which part would you like me to assemble?"
- "I'm not sure either. Do you have another idea? Why don't we try ____ and see if that works?"
- "Let's figure it out together. What if we use ____? Maybe it'll work."
- "Doing it this way might ____. Why don't we try ____ instead and see what happens?"

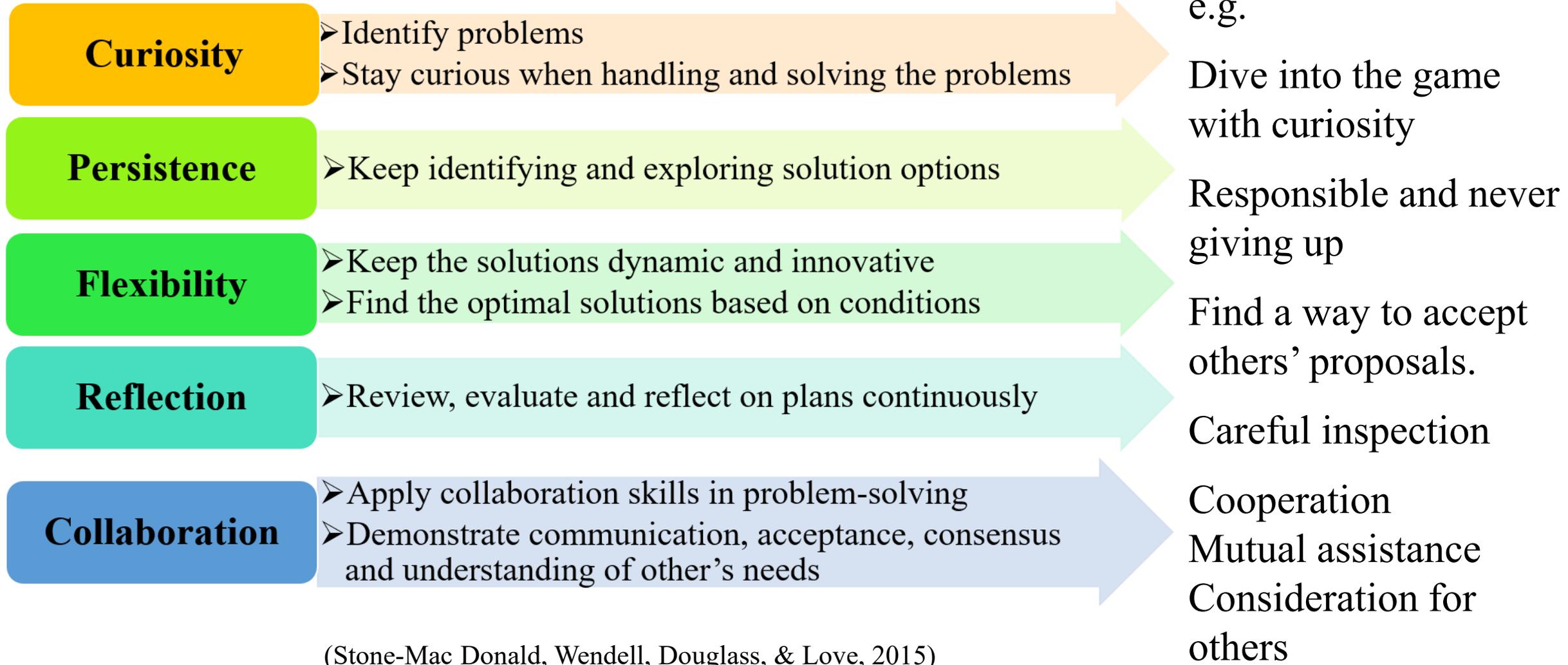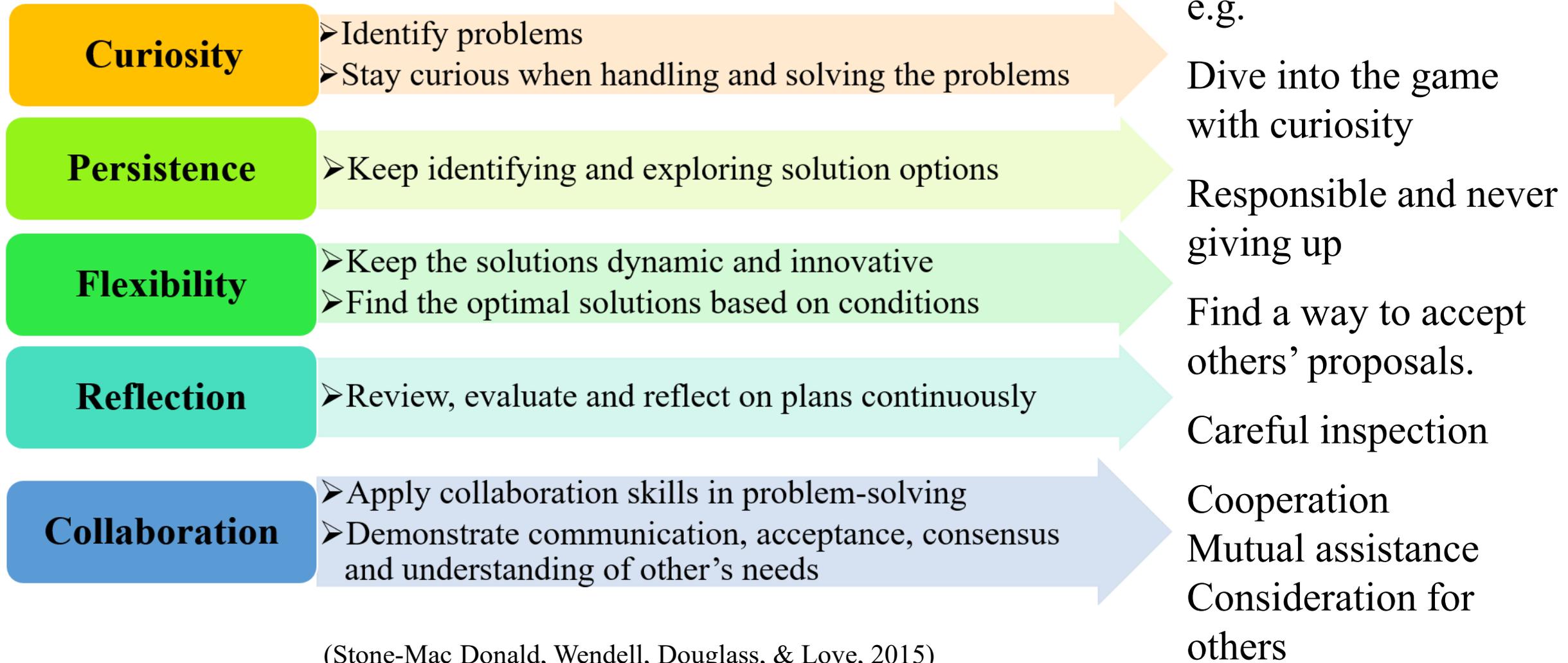# Experiential Activity 3:

On-the-spot testing…..

Provide loose material to construct sturdy bridges for animals and people to use.

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Conclusion

The Importance of Play

Think carefully:

What are the skills for children promoted by the games introduced today?

- cognitive and language development

- moral development

- affection and social abilities development

- physical development

- aesthetic development

Nurturing Creative Thinking Skills in Children

Leverage real-life scenarios/materials
to create problem-solving game scenarios
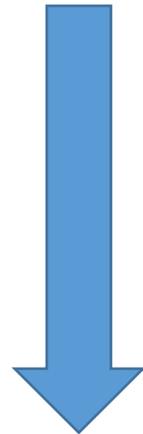
- demonstration

- encouragement

- effective questions

- provision of materials

Promote children's creative thinking skills

Helping Children Develop Creative Thinking Skills: Materials

Constructive building blocks
(Examples)

Source: All photos taken and provided by the speaker

Helping Children Develop
Creative Thinking Skills: Materials

Loose parts (use materials at hand)

A little game:

How many types of items did you find?

Source: All photos taken and provided by the speaker

Helping Children Develop Creative Thinking Skills: Materials

Loose parts (use materials at hand)

Examples:

- Metal box
- Straw
- Paper cup
- Basket
- Plastic box
- Paper box
- Chopsticks
- Toilet paper tube
- Fluffy wire

- Bag
- Coat hanger
- Fruit foam net
- Popsicle sticks
- Leaflets
- Hemp rope
- Cotton rope
- Nylon rope

Source: All photos taken and provided by the speaker

Loose parts (use materials at hand)
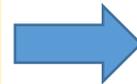
Natural elements
（Examples)
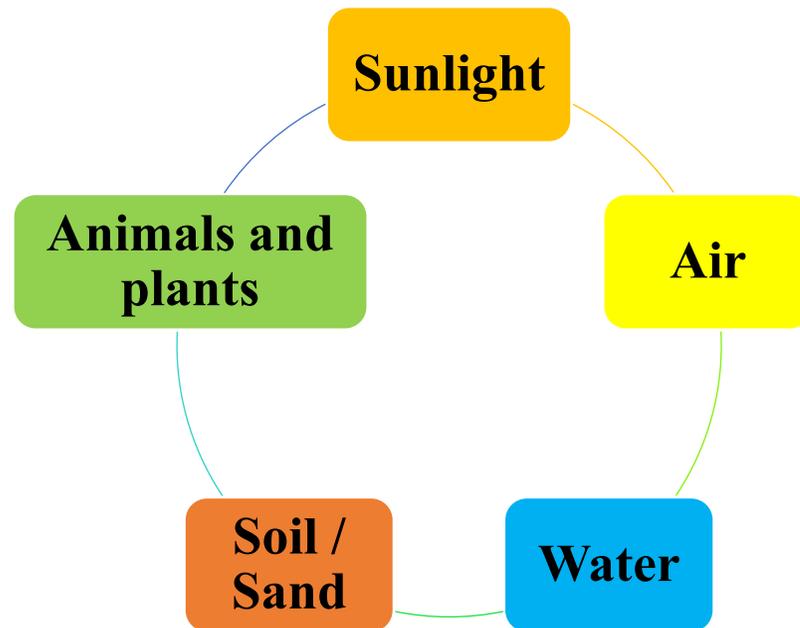
Additional parts
（Examples）

Sunlight

Air

Animals and plants

Water

Soil / Sand

+

Recycled materials

Natural materials

Man-made materials
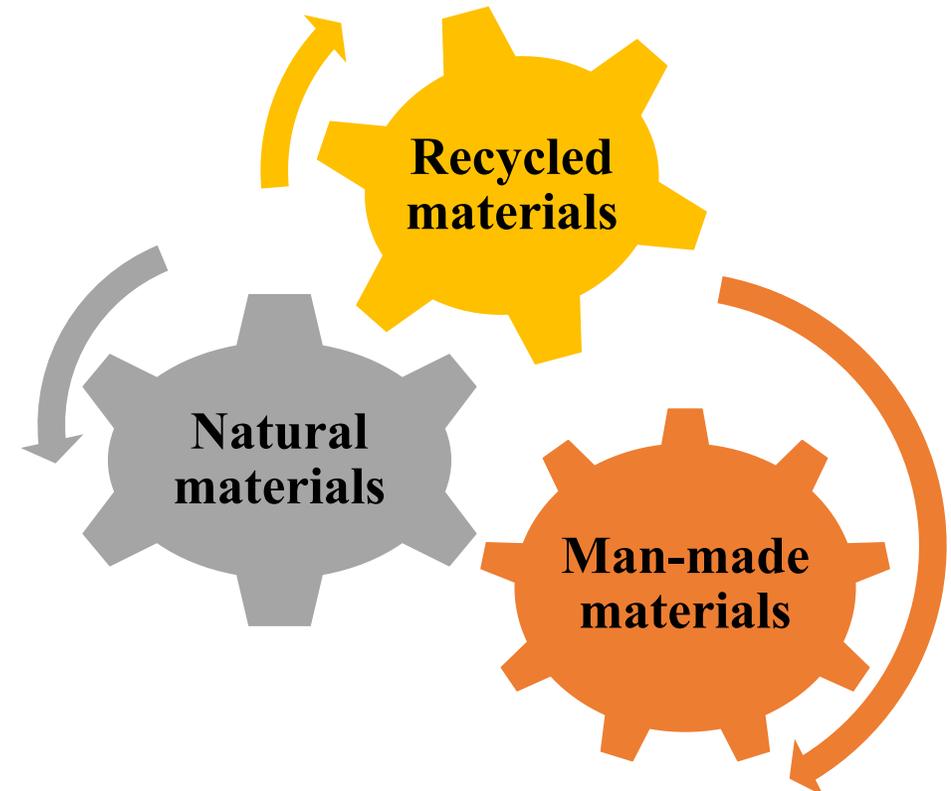
（周淑惠，2020 ；translated version ）

Helping Children Develop Creative Thinking Skills: Strategies

Fostering children's
creative thinking skills in problem solving

Parent's
supporting strategies

- Demonstration

- Encouragement

- Effective questioning

- Provision of materials

Curiosity:	• Identify problems
Persistence:	• Keep exploring solutions with repeated trials
Flexibility:	• Alter the usage / discover new usage of things • Find the optimal solutions based on conditions
Reflection:	• Review plans / arrangements continuously • Compare/evaluate own plan with those of others
Collaboration:	• Apply communication skills • Understand other's needs • Reach consensus

Through daily life and play, guide young children to develop sound values, such as:

- learning from failure and having the courage to try again

- appreciating others' efforts, contributions, and creations

- considering others' perspectives to find solutions to problems

Through daily life and play scenarios, cultivate character, creativity, interpersonal communication, and problem-solving skills. E.g.

1. problem-solving scenarios derived from daily routines

2. problem-solving scenarios derived from free play and cooperative games

3. role-play scenarios derived from picture book narratives

Reference:

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