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