ACT OUT THE PROBLEM

There may be times when students experience difficulty in visualizing a problem or the procedure necessary for its solution. In such cases, they may find it helpful to physically act out the problem situation. Acting out the problem may itself lead students to the answer, or it may lead them to find another strategy that will help them find the answer. Acting out the problem is a strategy that is very effective for young children.

Example 1:

There are 4 people in the room. If each one shakes hand with one another, how many handshakes occur?

Students may act out the problem, or they may use counters, toys, or figures to act out the problem. They can also draw a picture showing what happen in the problem.

Example 2

Nate has 14 sport cards. He says that half of the cards are baseball cards. Of the remaining, 4 of them are hockey cards. The rest are football cards. How many of each kind of card does Nate have?

Students may use any card to act out the problem and start with something like this:

After marking 7 baseball cards, students mark the 4 hockey cards and figure out the number of football cards.

Students may combine Act out the Problem and Drawing a Model (see below) strategies.