

## Cooperation: Working together to do more than you can do alone.

If you take a look at nearly any list online of what employers look for in a potential employee, you will find a word like teamwork, cooperation, or collaboration on the list. It's not surprising - we all know that successful businesses and healthy work environments require people who can work together.

However, sometimes we think that these skills happen automatically in ourselves and our young people and that we don't need to practice or work explicitly on the behaviors needed to be a good cooperater.

This month, as you accomplish any task as a family, remember to talk about what skills or traits you used to make that happen. How did you all work together to do more than you could do alone.

### CONVERSATIONS ABOUT COOPERATION:

#### For parent reflection:

- How is cooperation modeled to your child?
- What messages does your child get about cooperation from adults in their life?
- How can you help your child practice cooperation and teamwork?

A recent Stanford study (Carr and Walton, 2014) showed that "simply feeling like you're part of a team of people working on a task makes people more motivated as they take on challenges."

Families can work this month to create a "team" to accomplish something great. Maybe you keep all of your change, set a goal, and donate the funds at the end of month. Maybe you try to work with others to collect 1,000 canned goods, or volunteer at Habitat for Humanity, or work together to plan a trip somewhere special. How can you harness the power of working together to accomplish something in your own home?

#### With your child:

- When is it easy to cooperate with others?
- When do you have trouble being collaborative?
- What could help you practice cooperation each day?
- Have you ever had a bad experience when cooperating? What happened? How might you have done things differently for a different outcome?
- How might cooperation help you in the long run?

# COOPERATION

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## Working together to do more than you can do alone

### WEEK ONE:

#### What is cooperation?

By the time you get this far in school, cooperation is a value with which you should be very familiar. You are accustomed to working together – whether that's a project group in biology class, the chorus that joins voices to sing, or the team that trains together for competition. Cooperating and getting along in a group is a skill to take through school and into the "real world" as you'll never graduate from the need to work together.

### WEEK TWO:

#### You can be yourself/maintain your identity, even in a group/crowd

Working well together doesn't have to be about letting go of yourself – instead look for ways that you can bring your gifts and skills to a group to make you all better. You can be uniquely you and still a valuable part of a group setting.

### WEEK THREE:

#### How do I work with a group?

Personality conflicts, competing agendas, lack of motivation, and so many other issues can make group work less-than-fun. This week, Dr. Beth will let you in on some tips to help make group work easier and more rewarding for everyone involved.

### WEEK FOUR:

#### CHALLENGE: Food drive

Alone, you might only be able to help a couple of people by donating food. Together, your class or your school can help many people in your community or across the world by collecting non-perishable food items and sharing them with those in need.