


COOPERATION


“The Great Treehouse Disaster”


Understanding Cooperation from Your Child’s Point of View:

In “The Great Treehouse Disaster,” every village friend has an idea of what their new treehouse should be like, but the project turns into a disaster when nobody cooperates. Unless they can figure out a way to work together, they will never get anything done. Mr. Quigley teaches the kids that “when there is a job to do, “when we cooperate it will soon be through.” Working together is a lot more fun than struggling alone.

Cooperation means to work together with another person or with several others. Here are some things to consider in teaching your child about cooperation.

 **3 & 4 year-olds** will think of themselves as the center of the universe, because of their age and level of cognitive development. They perceive other people and things to have meaning only in relationship to themselves. Consequently, to very young children, cooperation means going along with their goals and needs. They are making the transition between parallel play (in which they may play near each other, but their ideas and actions are their own) and cooperative play (in which they interact and share and take turns). Parents can set good examples for cooperation by including children in projects which involve the whole family. Each family member, for example, can help serve juice and cookies at church or help clean, cut up, and cook vegetables for a meal for a friend who is confined to their home.

 **5 & 6 year-olds** are able to imitate older family members in cooperating. They are beginning to play well with others, but are becoming more self-assertive. Youngsters this age may begin to question the rules for table games, for example, because they want to win all the time. They cannot think about their thinking, so they do not see the faulty logic behind their wishes. This makes cooperation a challenge. Parents can encourage cooperation by observing out loud that if children do their part and work together, the work gets done. Taking photographs of cooperative family experiences and talking about the activities will reinforce the children’s teamwork.

 **7 & 9 year-olds** are at an age when they don’t want to do meaningful work. Rules become more relevant and children take pride in independence. They may be resistant to adult efforts to encourage their cooperation. Parents can continue to model cooperation by first showing their children cooperation in taking a specific action, such as how combined effort gets the dinner to the table faster. Next, they can encourage their children to join the team and reinforce their efforts at doing smaller parts of the dinner preparation. Finally, together, parent and children can select the role for which the children are responsible and let the children do it alone. Throughout the whole process, children can experience the joy of achievement.

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Follow Up Activities for You and Your Child

During the video, you may want to occasionally stop it and ask your children: “What do you think you would do (or feel or say) in this story?” Then, watch how the program ends.

After the program, you may want to try these activities:

- 1 Ask your children to share what they thought about the story. What character was their favorite? What character was most like them? In what ways?
- 2 Include your children in actually building something together. Depending on your interests, try a picture frame, a dog house, a tent, or a stew.
- 3 Let your children hear you describe to someone else a time when when you saw them cooperate. Be specific about the actions which were cooperative.
- 4 Provide props for a project, such as the friends shared in Quigley’s Village. You might offer safety goggles, hammer, nails, lumber, a nailbag, ruler, a pencil. With supervision, children can experiment with hammering nails and screwing screws into wood.
- 5 Have a family meeting where you talk about the importance of cooperation. Younger children could draw a picture of a time in which they cooperated. Talk about an example when family members cooperated to achieve a common goal.
- 6 Help children make a list of things that they cannot do by themselves, but that need cooperation in order to achieve, such as teeter-totter, play checkers, shake hands, move a piano, hug, wina race, play hide and seek, play catch, or have a conversation on the telephone. Add to the list, things that adults need help from others in order to accomplish, such as a basketball team, surgical team, or a race car team.
- 7 Choose a family cooking project, such as applesauce or vegetable soup. Find a task for everyone in the family.
- 8 Learn and sing together one of the songs from “The Great Treehouse Disaster.”



Supplemental Materials for You and Your Child

Additional resources and can be found at: www.quigleysvillage.net