



# the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 3 to 4

## This Month's Featured Value Is: **Cooperation**

Cooperation means working with others in harmony to achieve a goal, forming a team committed to finding solutions to any interpersonal conflicts that may arise along the way. It also means being ready to lend a hand by willingly following rules that benefit the greater group.



## What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

### First, Set Goals:

**Develop language skills that make it easier for children to listen to others and to practice working out conflicts in play.**

Three- and four-year-olds usually spend time with other kids in preschool or daycare, where they learn to hang up their coats, wait for others to be served, and sit quietly when it's circle time. They tend to cooperate with these rules largely because they crave approval from grown-ups. When they don't comply, it's usually because their natural impulses--to say what's on their mind or handle interesting objects--are too strong for them to control. It's important to help them find ways to overcome frustration and work through disputes, as well as understand the benefits of cooperation.

### Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Encourage verbal problem-solving** when conflicts arise: "How do you think that makes her feel?" and "Can you think of some ways to work this out?" Then talk to your child about things others may need in order to work and play together comfortably. Stress that to cooperate, everybody has to be aware of everyone else's needs.
- ✓ **Emphasize how much fun it is** to make up games with friends or work together on an art project. Encourage your child to think up new games that involve cooperation and try them out with their playmates or siblings.
- ✓ **Have a cooperative treasure hunt.** In this version, you team up rather than compete for the prize. First, make sure the treasure is something everyone can enjoy--perhaps a DVD you've rented or a special dessert. Then draw one large clue on a piece of paper and cut the paper up into lots of "puzzle pieces." Hide the pieces around the house, and have family members search for them. As they find the pieces, they cooperate to assemble the puzzle, solving the mystery and finding the prize together!

### Then, Report Back!

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