



# the family values toolkit

For Children Birth to Age 2

## 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:

**Introduce your child to the basics of sharing and problem-solving.**

During this early stage, parents may not see instant results from their attempts to instill cooperation. Infants and babies can't truly cooperate, in the sense of willingly going along with an agenda. Parents, however, can begin modeling this value for them by tuning in to their child's needs and meeting them.

As a child nears two, being uncooperative is the name of the game. Kids this age like to push limits, perhaps as a way to better understand rules. Two-year-olds don't work in synchrony with others easily. Their concern with their own needs makes it a struggle for them to share toys and combine efforts. These limitations are natural at this stage, but there are ways parents can begin fostering cooperation.

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

- ✓ **Incorporate turn-taking into any game you play together.** Make a point of saying, "Now it's your turn, now it's my turn." If your child refuses to cooperate with other children, talk him or her through the steps of a compromise: "You really wanted a turn, but it's not OK to take Robby's toy away. Please say to him, 'When you're done, may I have a turn?'"
- ✓ **Help your child avoid black-and-white thinking** when there's something he or she really wants: "What could you give Robby to play with while you play with his toy?"
- ✓ **Try "Musical Hula Hoops."** This cooperative version of musical chairs has parents putting a couple of hula hoops on the floor. Children walk around the hoops while a song plays. When the music stops, everyone must get inside the hoops and make room for each other. Nobody loses!

### Then, Report Back!

Share your stories of success, your challenges, and overall experiences with others in our community @

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