

Plays Alone and Has Difficulty Cooperating (Things a Child Can Do)

Children who play alone typically do not understand themselves very well, which translates into not understanding others. They also often do not have the social skills to participate and cooperate with others. The following activity will provide your child with an opportunity to learn more about himself and then connect this information to ways he can participate with others, including cooperating. Help your child then see how he can use this knowledge as he forms positive relationships with other people.

1. Things a Child Can Do Well

Have your child create a list of “Things I can do well.” If he can’t write well, just ask him to say what it is he can do well. Discuss how he can use these skills to help others.

2. Things a Child Can Do with His or Her Body

Have your child create a list of “Things I can do with my body.” Again, he can either write down or say the things he can do with his body. Discuss how he might use these parts of the body to help others. “With my hands I can help others by...” etc.

3. Ways I Can Help

Ask your child to verbally repeat and then complete the following statements.

“I am a helpful person in my class because I can...”

“I am a helpful person during recess because I can...”

“I am a helpful person at home because I can...”

4. Invite your child to practice being helpful with others at home.

Organize an activity that invites your family members to practice cooperating. When they successfully cooperate, ask your child to talk about what his feelings were and what the other children might think and feel too.

Invite your child to practice cooperating with people other than your family members. Invite a friend over and organize a task the children can do together (e.g. drawing something together or each doing a part of the task). Talk with your child about the importance of understanding what he thinks and feels to improve the ability to cooperate with others.

5. Tie it Together

Point out that cooperation is helpful and not cooperating is harmful. Encourage your child to look for all of the different ways he can cooperate with others so that his relationships with others will be more positive and his interaction with others will be more satisfying.