

Unit Name: Cooperation

Parents, carers and families are an integral part of the Positive Living Skills Initiative.

The Positive Living Skills program is a universal and practical program designed specifically for children from Preschool onwards, and the principles and positive effects of the learning experiences can reach teachers, school staff, parents, families and wider communities.

The goal is to prevent problems before they develop, by implementing a positive life skills program from an early age. The Positive Living Skills program assists to create habitual positive, healthy supportive behaviours by guiding children to learn to understand and self-direct their own thinking processes, emotions, actions, responses and outcomes, and build effective self-management and social skills.

When students develop effective **cooperation** skills, they are building a skill set that will assist them through every area of life, for the duration of their life.

Definition of Cooperation:

To work together well and support each other to achieve common goals.

Why Cooperation?

Cooperation, caring and collaboration are critical skills for living our lives fully and joyfully, both as children and adults. Most of what we do in life involves interacting with other people.

Joy and success within personal relationships and working relationships is dependent on having skills that free us to interact in positive and cooperative ways.

Most conflicts at the individual team and societal level occur when people don't have the will or skills for caring and cooperating. The majority of problems we encounter in our families, personal relationships, games, schools, work and communities are related to a lack of genuine caring, respect and cooperation.

Cooperative learning is an educational approach which aims to organise classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. There is much more to Cooperative Learning than merely arranging students into groups, and it has been described as "structuring positive interdependence"

There are 5 Principles of Cooperative Learning:

1. Positive interdependence – group members perceive they are linked with each other in a way that one cannot succeed unless everyone succeeds.
2. Promotive Interaction – where members share resources, and help support encourage and praise each other's efforts.
3. Individual and group accountability – the group is accountable for achieving its goals, and also each member is accountable for their contribution and learning.
4. Interpersonal and small group skills – are developed through cooperative learning, such as communication, positive reinforcement, constructive feedback and problem solving
5. Group Processing – exists when group members reflect on how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships.

Early Learning:

The philosophy of the Unit of Cooperation at this learning level is to turn traditional games of winning and losing into collaborative learning and fun. Focused on inclusion rather than competition promotes further learning, and students learn how they can contribute to common goals, while sharing, respecting others and waiting for their turn.

Cooperative activities are a good way to get children working together toward a common goal. They are playing and working with each other rather than against each other. These cooperative activities nurture and reaffirm feelings of confidence, acceptance and value, and eliminate fear.

If children's early experiences with games and sport are positive, joyful, and uplifting, then more children will become joyfully engaged in physical activity and sport over the course of their lifetime.

Through cooperative play, children learn to share, to empathise with others, to be concerned about others' feelings, to help each other, to work together to achieve a common goal, to get along better, and to enjoy each others' company.



When children are working together toward a common end, rather than against one another, negative responses can be turned into helpful ones. Players believe they are an accepted part of the game, contributors in the game, and as such feel totally involved. Feelings of acceptance are directly related to self-esteem and overall happiness. One of the goals of cooperative games is for children to feel 'left in' because this helps them to feel good about themselves and good about their teammates.

Individuals can cooperate with each other, as well as with their environment (eg cleaning up to ensure rooms and School grounds stay clean and tidy).

The focus at this level is that there is no failure or getting it 'wrong'.

For Students studying Years 3-6:

At this level, students begin to see the greater picture of collaborating and cooperating with others.

They see themselves as part of a greater whole, of a team or School community. There will be consequences to some actions and students are encouraged to negotiate with each other for mutual and individual benefit.

Teamwork and respect play a pivotal role at this stage. Respectful collaborative and cohesive teams achieve a synergy that enhances results beyond the combined efforts of the individuals, and effective teamwork fosters harmony, builds relationships and enhances performance.

Here are some ideas on applying the concepts of Cooperation at home:

- Applying the concepts of Cooperation will improve the effectiveness of communication and teamwork within the family
- It will also assist to build a more positive, supportive and motivational environment at home
- Working together within an inclusive, non-competitive environment, strengthens bonds and promotes positive relationships
- Learning to develop more trust of self and trust of others, will strengthen understanding and application of teamwork, leadership and followership within the home environment

*****For more information about the Positive Living Skills program, and to access free resources via our Positive Living Skills family link, visit www.positivelivingskills.com**