

Why teamwork is important



Being a parent can be great fun, with oodles of opportunities for love and excitement. It also brings challenges and hard work. **Teamwork helps couples face these challenges in a way that minimizes conflict and strengthens relationships** with each other, children, friends and extended family.

Facts about teamwork

Teamwork is working together and being in **general agreement about your approach to parenting**. For example, this means general rules about bedtimes, eating and so on.

It's also about **backing each other up**, so that your child doesn't play one of you off against the other. For example, a child might say to his dad, 'Mom said I couldn't go swimming today'. Dad might think that the decision is unfair, but he'd back up his partner in front of their child and discuss the issue with his partner later.

The way that parents interact with each other has enormous influence on children. Research tells us the following:

- Children's sense of safety and wellbeing is closely linked to how their parents behave towards one another.
- Children's happiness and development also depends on the quality of their relationships with their parents.
- Severe conflict between parents is associated with behavioral and developmental problems in children.

Managing conflict: part of family life

Grown-ups have a large role to play in creating a positive environment for children. This means supporting each other, discussing and solving problems together. In other words, using teamwork.

Some conflict is inevitable – even in the strongest of relationships. All parents start out with different ideas about family life. Beliefs can differ on fundamental parenting issues such as what is 'normal' or 'right', and how to raise children.

Children learn from how they see their parents interact. For parents, this means showing children that **disagreements are a normal part of life**, and teaching them healthy strategies for coping with and resolving conflict. This is also key to the long-term health and happiness of relationships.

Children can cope and even learn about how to handle conflict if they see parents disagree from time to time. But they are badly affected by frequent, angry, unresolved conflict.