

Why teamwork is important

By Parenting Research Centre

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 strengthens relationships and minimises conflict.**

Teamwork skills can also strengthen relationships with your children, carers, friends, family and extended family.

Why is teamwork important?

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

- A child's sense of safety and wellbeing is closely linked to how their parents behave toward one another.
- A child's happiness and development also depends on the quality of their relationship with a parent.
- Severe conflict between parents is associated with behavioural and developmental problems in children.



We need more practice
stepping in time

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.

Managing conflict – part of family life

Adults have a large role to play in creating a positive environment for children. This means supporting each other. Discussing and solving problems together. 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 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. Teamwork is about [working together to solve the solvable problems](#), managing the unsolvable ones and managing conflict should it arise.

Focusing on you

Your humour. Your health. Your happiness. Your stress levels. These can all have an impact on how much you enjoy the time you spend with your family. And how well you cope with the stresses and challenges that arise.

[Looking after yourself](#) and your [relationships](#) can give you increased energy and responsiveness for your partner and children, and help you get the most out of being a parent. Teamwork skills can help keep your relationship with your partner healthy. When you feel closer to your partner and more supported as a parent, together you can create a better environment for your children.

Focusing on your relationship

Caring for children on a day-to-day basis does place demands on a relationship. It can be hard to juggle work, family and social demands.

Getting outside help

Teamwork can also help you [get extra support](#) when you need it.

There might be times when you and your partner need more support than teamwork skills; for example, if you or your partner feel very distressed about the relationship. If you feel stuck in attempts to resolve your issues and have even considered separation, or feel unsafe because of physical or verbal abuse, please seek [professional help](#).

Source: www.raisingchildren.net.au

The Price of Disunity

Children not raised in their natural family by both their natural parents are significantly disadvantaged on psychological, academic, and socio-economic measures. These are the findings of Barry Maley in his major study *Family and Marriage in Australia* (Centre for Independent Studies, 2001).

In Australia today about 30% of children do not live in a home with their natural parents. Every child has a right to a settled upbringing in his or her own loving family but how often things don't seem to turn out that way. Two houses are never better than one home. A parent who goes through a divorce, sometimes through absolutely no personal fault, will need to work very hard to avoid lasting negatives on the children. Of course a single or remarried parent can do an excellent job, but it is very much more difficult. And in a sense, it is not meant to be that hard.

James Stenson in *Upbringing* insists that unity is the first characteristic of successful parents. Ray Guarendi echoes the same principle. He writes in his classic study *Back to the Family*, "the best thing a husband can do for his children is to love their mother." There are so many studies showing the damage to children from serious discord at home.

It is not just the conflicting guidelines they receive nor just that children can become pawns in the conflict. Nor is it just that parents who fail to communicate effectively allow even the sweetest children to divide and conquer to get what they want, to their long term disadvantage. Conflict is sapping by its very nature; parents in conflict lose focus on proactive child rearing. Teenagers particularly are changing so quickly that parents must not take their eye off the ball.

Worst of all, when parents divorce, the message to children can be that love runs out, that unconditional acceptance doesn't happen in reality. In a world where parents reject each other, parents can reject their children. This is a tough intuition for a ten year old.