

# Parenting: teamwork, why it's important

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## Parenting teamwork

Teamwork is working together and being in general agreement about your approach to parenting. For example, this means agreeing on general rules about bedtimes, eating and so on. It is also about backing each other up, so that your child does not play one of you off against the other.

## Why is parenting teamwork important?

Parent teamwork has lots of benefits.

- Children feel safe and good about themselves when their parents get along.
- Less fighting and conflict between parents is linked to fewer behaviour and development problems in children.
- Children learn good ways to handle conflict and resolve problems peacefully when their parents do this by working together as a team.
- Good teamwork skills can help keep parent relationships healthy. When you feel closer to your spouse and more supported as a parent, together you can create a better environment for your children.

## Backing each other up: why it's important

Parents who back each other up find it much easier to manage their children's behaviour. Children thrive in environments where they know what their limits are and see rules being used consistently. Agreeing with each other in front of your child makes it easier to enforce the family rules.

If a child thinks that one parent is softer, or that some rules apply with one parent and not the other, it can create extra tension between the parents.

Backing each other up does not mean agreeing just because it is in the best interests of the child. It is about showing your child how you can respect and support each other, even when you have a difference of opinion.

## Tips for good teamwork with your spouse

- **Plan your family rules.** Talk with your spouse and agree on 4-5 family rules. Once you have decided on the rules, stick to them. Decide together how you will enforce them and how you will reward your child for following rules – for example, by giving praise or spending time together.
- **Back up your spouse's decisions.** Check whether your spouse has already dealt with a situation before acting. Try not to go back on a decision your spouse has made. If you

do not like the way your spouse is dealing with a situation, wait until it is over and discuss it later.

- **Support each other in practical ways.** Share tasks such as putting children to bed. If your spouse is dealing with a difficult situation with a child, offer support by taking care of any other children. When it is over, offer emotional support by giving a hug or making a cup of tea.
- **Talk about problem situations.** When problems occur, wait until everyone is calm before you sit down away from the children and talk about how it went. Praise your spouse for anything that went well. Try making only one suggestion. You can always make other suggestions later.
- **Support your spouse.** Keep an eye out for periods when your spouse is tired or stressed and offer practical help and positive feedback. Let your spouse know that all the effort is appreciated. Sometimes simple emotional support can make a big difference – like just being there ready to help or listen (and not being distracted by other things).
- **Avoid stepping in.** Even if your spouse seems to be having trouble, try not to step in and take control. Ask if your spouse would like you to help. Other ways to help could be sharing tasks such as housework and picking up children from school.
- **Have regular catch-ups even when things are going well.** Make a regular time to talk about the children and parenting. This gives you the chance to plan approaches and ideas for dealing with future challenges.
- **Focus on sharing the good times.** Remember to talk about the good things about parenting and your children as well as any problems.



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

## Recommended Reads

- [I love you but you always put me last: Why the kids-first approach to parenting is hurting your marriage--and the proven plan to restore balance](#)
- [The conscious parent's guide to coparenting: A mindful approach to creating a collaborative, positive parenting plan](#)
- [Equally Shared Parenting](#)