

COOPERATION

What is this developmental skill?

Cooperation is the ability to work with others toward shared goals by taking turns, sharing responsibilities, listening, compromising, and contributing to group activities.

How does this normally develop?

Children first cooperate with caregivers during daily routines and later with peers through games, classroom activities, and family responsibilities. Consistent guidance teaches flexibility, patience, and teamwork.

How can neglect interfere with its development?

Neglect may teach children that they must meet their own needs without relying on others. Some become overly independent, while others struggle with frustration whenever they must share control or resources.

What might this look like?

A child may:

- Refuse to share.
- Dominate group activities.
- Give up quickly during teamwork.
- Become frustrated by turn-taking.
- Resist following group expectations.
- Prefer to work alone.

Parenting Implications

Cooperation grows through enjoyable shared activities, not repeated lectures. Caregivers can create many opportunities for teamwork while offering encouragement and gentle coaching.

From Understanding to Attunement

Instead of viewing cooperation as simple compliance, recognize that it reflects a child's growing ability to trust others, regulate emotions, and work toward shared goals.