



Keep It Positive. Keep It Simple. Keep It Real.

Un-Challenge

Bonus Critical Key: Team Up

Working in groups requires a wide variety of skills that are vital for success in every career and walk of life. It is not OK for students to always say "I prefer to work alone". Being able to contribute and justify ideas as well as accept new ideas from others are just two of the foundational skills that can be developed by working with a group. Additionally, working interdependently requires children to be empathetic listeners and collaborative humans.

20 MINUTE ACTIVITY

Rock Garden

This is one of those activities that can definitely stretch a couple of 20 minute sessions if you need to. We divided the process up and gathered rocks outside one day, washed them another, and finally painted. One of the kids loved it so much, she kept painting for days!

The reason this activity is in our "Team Up" Critical Key is that it was really a call to action for our community to team up and spread some happiness during the strict quarantine days. Chad and I had seen a smiley face rock on one of our runs and it made us pause and smile. We decided it was perfect for the kids! After painting the rocks, we did a family outing to the bike path to place our rocks near the smiley face. It actually worked and we saw several rock art instillations around our town!

You Need: Acrylic paint, brushes, water, rocks, creativity

Parent Tip: We sealed our rocks with Modge Podge so that we could place them outside.

The Inspiration



Rockin' Family Time!



DAILY DOINGS

Group Decisions

Sometimes teamwork means coming to a group decision. Model how to listen (without responding) to everyone's ideas.

Then model how to choose the best idea for the given situation. This is as simple as deciding what is for dinner tonight or which park should we visit or which ice-cream flavor should we get?

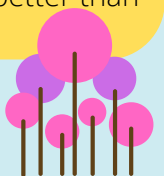
Make sure that everyone's voice is heard and there is a fair conclusion. Fair doesn't always mean you get what you want, but what is best for the group.

I'd rather do this project alone.

I used to hear this all the time as a teacher. I get it. It's often easier and quicker to complete something on your own. However, your end product could be so much better by utilizing other people's strengths. This is a great time to talk to kids about their strengths and weaknesses. What do you bring to the group table?

What does someone else do better than you that could help your combined work be really incredible? How can you ask someone about their strengths or preferences so you can get the job done more efficiently?

This skill is important in school projects but also at home. Which chores are you best at? Is there a home project that if we put our skills together will turn out better than if we go it alone?





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Un-Challenge Bonus Team Up



WHY ISN'T TEAM UP ONE OF THE CRITICAL KEYS?

- Since teamwork and contribution to a group goal come up all the time in school and life, we don't see teamwork as a "stand-alone" Critical Key but rather an element of all of the Critical Keys.

WHERE ARE THE ACADEMIC STANDARDS?

- There is not one nationally recognized set of academic standards for social emotional learning and building teamwork. There is a wide variety of programs available that depending on the lens through which educators or parents like to view this type of work: restorative justice, pillars of character, mindfulness name a few.
- We focus on working as a team and contributing to a group in our work with families.

HOME CONNECTIONS

- Play some team games at home and use the opportunity to build skills. Plan a strategy as a team and be sure to include each kids strengths.
- Team up in the kitchen! You can measure while I read the recipe.
- Play the progressive story game at dinner. Tell the first part of a story or an event that happened. Stop at a critical point and "pass" the story to the next person. Everyone is a contributing member to a great tale!

Activity Extensions & Alternatives:

During our Winter Olympics (yes, we had at home Olympics!), we broke two families into teams. Some of our players were not as motivated as others. We really had to come together as a team to figure out who was going to be our main asset in each event. Lola was ready for extreme tubing and led the charge for my team while Fern rocked Frisbee golf (Lola wasn't much help here). I closed out the event with winter corn hole. We discussed who would be best at each event to get people excited and thinking about how important they were to the team. A full Olympics may seem like a huge event, but we really planned it the night before and set it up in the morning using whatever games and equipment we already had. We didn't buy anything (we couldn't - everything was closed!).

Group photo



Extreme tubing!

