

NOODLE DRUMMING COOPERATION BUILDS FOUNDATION FOR GLOBAL PEACE THROUGH SUPERKIDS

by Janai ‘Granma Boom’ Mestrovich

Curly egg noodles were laid on the top of a large drum by each of the ten children’s little preschool hands in an unforgettable, fun lesson on cooperation. The second ring of children waiting to activate their own turns with Noodle Drumming had shakers and rattles to join in the Noodle Drumming music, sitting on the outside of the drumming circle.

First, I demonstrated putting one handful of noodles on the face of the drum, then directed a child to put another handful there. I asked if the children wanted to have that many noodles or more. They shouted with gusto that ‘more’ would be better. I explained that if we all took turns and cooperated nicely, we would have lots of noodles to drum. Every child cooperated with a smile, pouring uncooked egg noodles onto the drum, taking turns and being patient.

Next I gave instructions for everyone to hold drumsticks up in the air and wait for my signal to begin drumming very quietly and gently to observe how slowly the noodles would move when we drummed lightly. I told them I would give a signal when we could all cooperate together and begin drumming loudly and fast so that the noodles would jump up in the air, flying onto the floor. Eyes sparkled and huge grins appeared on their faces as they nodded and agreed to cooperate with both phases of the drumming. Getting commitment to cooperate was an important key. And they did exactly that.





Their joy was breathtaking as they realized how fun it was to do Noodle Drumming in all its phases in a cooperative manner that brought fun feelings to everyone. After the first round, I told them if they wanted to do another Noodle Drumming we would all need to cooperate and pick up noodles off the floor, placing them back onto the drum. I no sooner said the words and twenty little hands were activating noodle pick-up. We repeated our drumming experience then switched with the outer circle, each inner circle child handing a drumstick in exchange for a rattle or shaker from the outer circle participants. There were no arguments. No lack of sharing or cooperating. Every child learned about the meaning of cooperation and what can be accomplished together *because they were having fun!* It was a huge success with children asking if we could cooperate and do Noodle Drumming again sometime. You betcha, kiddos!

There is no substitute for 3D learning when children can use more senses learning a lesson than just hearing words to memorize. In this cooperation lesson they saw, heard and had a tactile feeling experience. A great bonus on teaching cooperation in a fun way was seeing how good the children felt about themselves. They felt like empowered Superkids!

Why Cooperation is an Essential Ingredient in Children's Lives

Cooperation IS the foundation for world peace. Children comprise almost 30% of the world population (Global Population Composition <https://www.census.gov/population/international/files/wp02/wp-02004.pdf>). If we as adults profess to

want world peace, we need allies. We are not accomplishing a settled state of being in a peaceful atmosphere on this precious home planet by ourselves. Kids are not only tech savvy, they have creative abilities beyond our means to problem solve world dilemmas....if we give them a living chance to participate. That thirty percent of our population needs to be on board with the peace plan or it will not happen. Children grow into adults. What are we giving them to be prepared for what they will inherit? Giving them skill-based experiences to know for themselves why values such as cooperation are important will serve them in real time today while creating a solid foundation for their relationships, choices and doing their part in the future to assist with planetary changes in a cooperative manner.

Suggestions on How to Proceed with Cooperation in Young Lives

The beginning step is to teach fun ways to cooperate. In any skill-based lessons, waiting until children are squabbling and in crisis, are not cooperating and are upset, beyond being civil, is NOT a time to teach a new skill. No skill will be relayed and retained, even if it is forced as a rule, when stressful symptoms are being displayed Unless children have a good understanding and experience with the concept being introduced prior to the stress, they can't grasp it when upset. Here is what works, step by step.

Use the word, 'cooperate' as you set up fun activities that require cooperation in order to accomplish results that everyone will be delighted by. If cooperation is taught as a rule that has to be followed without fun as an ingredient, it will not serve to motivate children as much as something that brings smiles. If a child likes a jellybean, she will want to taste its flavor again. It is the same with fun experiences. Note that children repeat over and over what they like. A positive, fun approach brings immediate gratification, happy inner rewards with good feelings, builds confidence and creates a desire to have more of the same. There's plenty of time in childhood to get to more serious forms of cooperation. Leave a good feeling setting inside children about cooperation and you will see results for a lifetime. Not only that, but when they have been properly introduced to the concept and

have had a memorable, fun experience, it is much easier for them to recall the concept's importance as a good feeling to experience and repeat.

My book, [SUPERKID POWER GUIDEBOOK](#), available on Amazon.com, is filled with activities to introduce and reinforce concepts such as the topic of cooperation in an easy, hands-on approach.

Techniques for Reinforcement

1. Allow times for children to be creative and in charge of cooperation ideas. "Kaleigh, you could think of something you want me to cooperate with and invite me to join you."

2. Be spontaneous in order to integrate its meaning into children's lives, asking them good ways to join together and cooperate if it's putting away dishes, counting marbles to put in a sack or helping each other with toy pick-up.

3. Create a song or jingle to sing and march to with fun enthusiasm. Here is an example:

Cooperation Jingle
 Cooperate, cooperate
 We're shaking hands.
 Cooperate, cooperate
 Give peace to the land.

4. Roleplay. Suggest becoming your child and your child becoming you. Act out a cooperation incident that didn't turn out well. Make light of the situation but discuss feelings, body sensations, etc. That act out a situation that did reap success and compare how differently you both felt, thoughts you had and how much tension was involved or not involved in your bodies. (Think simply on tension....tension feels like tied up knots inside; relaxation feels like soft sox.)

5. Here is a poem I wrote that can be read to children for reinforcement:

FROG COOPERATION

There once was a frog
 Who did sadly say
 "I want a good friend ("ribbet"...make sound effect)
 With whom I can play."
 This frog, you see,
 Always wanted HIS way;
 So all the other frogs
 Didn't want him to play.

The frog thought and thought
 And felt his feelings, too.
 He wanted friends to play with
 So he decided what to do.
 He knew it was important ("ribbet")
 If he wanted a playmate
 To share with other frogs
 And especially to cooperate.
 So to change his behavior
 And cooperate real well
 He took turns and shared
 Then others thought that was swell.
 Cooperating with others ("ribbet")
 The frog knew to be
 An important part of growing,
 Having friends and being happy.

Janai Mestrovich 1982

Be Creative with Children

Ask children to create a story about cooperation and favorite animal friends. Very often young children can relate through animals instead of directly applying a concept to themselves. A puppet show can be fun, too.

During the focus on cooperation, be sure to talk about where you feel good inside (stomach or shoulders, etc.) when you cooperate and make a good choice. Ask children where they feel good when they cooperate and where they feel bad when no one is cooperating. Grounding the concept in the body instead of just being a thought in the mind is a key to true integration and ownership of the skill.

Every child has the potential to FEEL like a Superkid. When children learn to value a concept such as cooperation, they build confidence and self-worth because they know they are contributing to the family or society. We are fortunate to know how to help children become Superkids and bring greater peace to the planet. Let's help them know we need them and that their role in helping us is vital.

Children need to feel needed in our homes and society. This will help motivate them to feel like Superkids who make a difference!

Janai 'Grandma Boom' Mestrovich has a blog on her website www.grandmaboom.com