



Welcome to our fifth edition of *Bringing School Home* ! The Simcoe County District School Board produces this regular e-bulletin to help parents support children on their journey of lifelong learning.

We know positive connections between home and school support student achievement. In each *Bringing School Home* e-bulletin you'll find practical tips and strategies to help your child achieve success in those important years of learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Bringing School Home is available through the [Simcoe County District School Board website](http://www.scdsb.on.ca) (www.scdsb.on.ca). As well, parents, guardians and other interested members of our school communities may subscribe through our website and have the bulletin e-mailed directly to their e-mail accounts. (Readers may also unsubscribe at any time.) Please send your comments and feedback to: webadmin@scdsb.on.ca.

Question of the Month: Teamwork and Cooperation

How can I encourage teamwork and cooperation, at school and at home?

Fostering a spirit of teamwork has tremendous advantages for both children and their parents. While parents may appreciate the ease of interacting with more cooperative children, young people also benefit from increased self-confidence and greater preparedness for “the real world.” Whether it’s at a worksite, in the boardroom or on the sports field, success in life is linked to our ability to act as team players and to cooperate with others.

In an educational setting, a focus on teamwork helps students learn problem solving, communication, conflict resolution and negotiation skills. To further emphasize the importance of teamwork, cooperation was selected as one of the SCDSB's ten Commit to Character attributes and is highlighted and modeled at every SCDSB school.

You're quite right to suggest that these important messages can also be reinforced at home! Here are some tips to get you started:

Tips to encourage cooperation in children:

- Schedule household chores for a time when all family members can complete them together.
- Practice teamwork with fun activities such as playing charades, working on a jigsaw puzzle, or making homemade pizza together.
- Model cooperative behaviour and reward cooperation in your child. Praise the specific behaviour you want to encourage (e.g., "Thank you for working with your sister to pick up your toys. I really appreciate the way you cooperated to get the job done.").
- Encourage participation in group activities, such as those offered through service and volunteer groups, sports teams, and creative endeavours such as school plays, choral singing, etc.
- Make an effort to screen your children's television programs, movies, books and video games. Help them choose those that reflect the principles of friendship, sharing and kindness.
- Suggest ways your child can help others, and explain why his help is needed. For example, you may suggest that he hold the door open for someone because the other person's hands are full. Explaining why someone needs help often makes children more willing to cooperate.

Tips to encourage cooperation in teens:

- Engaging in part-time jobs and/or volunteer work can provide teens with good opportunities to practice cooperation and teamwork skills.
- Not all group projects allow students to pick their team members. This can be a true test of cooperation, since young people may shy away from working with unfamiliar peers. Remind your teen that everyone has strengths and encourage her to think about what new assets the other team members bring to the table.
- Treat your teen to tickets for a favourite sports game. After the game, discuss what

made the winning team successful. (Alternatively, go to a live theatre production and discuss how the cast members worked together to create and present an enjoyable performance.)

- Show your teen what can be accomplished through cooperation. Try working together on an activity that yields prompt, measurable results. Painting walls, organizing the garage or winterizing the garden are all good options because it is easy to see how much you've accomplished – and how quickly the work goes when more than one person is involved!
- Ensure your teen feels needed, and express appreciation for his help. People who understand that their contributions are important and valued are more likely to assist others.
- Create a “team” atmosphere by having all family members take turns deciding what to have for dinner, where to go on vacation, etc. Each person can also take turns doing the tasks nobody wants to do, such as taking out the garbage or cleaning out the cat litter.

This month's featured web pages

We invite you to visit www.scdsb.on.ca often for news, facts, school information, Board highlights and hundreds of other pages about Simcoe County's public education system. This month we are featuring our “News Room” web pages, which are packed with examples of teamwork and cooperation in action: <http://www.scdsb.on.ca/news/news.cfm>.

Our Internet surfing this month leads to the University of Illinois' Family Teamwork page: <http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/familyworks/learn-06.html>.

Next Issue

The next issue of *Bringing School Home* will feature “Future Pathways for Our Sons & Daughters”

Quote of the month

“No employer today is independent of those about him. He cannot succeed alone, no matter how great his ability or capital. Business today is more than ever a question of cooperation.” ~ Orison Swett Marden, founder of *Success Magazine*

The Simcoe County District School Board is deeply committed to ensuring all learners have the opportunity to realize their dreams within a vibrant and successful public education system. We are very proud of our 57,000 students who are learning and achieving in our 107 schools and six adult learning centres throughout our urban and rural communities. Working with school communities, our dedicated and skilled staff members provide quality programs to help students develop lifelong learning skills in safe, caring environments. Our schools are located in the Huronia and Georgian Bay regions of south-central Ontario.

For more information visit our web site at www.scdsb.on.ca



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