

Preschool Game: Hoot Owl Hoot!

How do you feel about cooperative games? Do you feel a child needs to learn to compete at an early age? Do you feel cooperative games are for those without a competitive spirit? Or do you feel cooperation is a skill best learned in a low stress and fun environment?

I have to admit that the thought of a cooperative game seemed pointless. After all a game suggests a winner and a loser or can it really be called a game? My kids are involved in sports and in sports the team plays cooperatively to beat the other team. In my mind that was enough cooperation why have a board game where no one wins since if everyone wins no one really wins. I am reminded of a line from The Incredibles when Blaze says, "If everyone is special, then no one is."



You know what I do love though? I love being reminded that I need to be flexible in my thinking and that I can still be proven wrong or at least allow myself to be proven wrong. When I first opened [Hoot Owl Hoot!](#), I could not understand why all the owls were exactly the same. I expected a distinguishing characteristic so one would know which owl belongs to whom and who was winning. How I missed the "A Cooperative Game for Kids" on the cover I will never know. I most likely would have been disinterested in the game if I read that but I also would have missed the experience. You see in my home board games are serious business and we enjoy a good competition.

Giving it a chance, we opened the game and began to play. The first thing I noticed was that my children assumed it was a competitive game and began to work against each other. My 6 year old was offended when my 2 year old moved "her" owl. I explained to my girls that the point was to work together. My 6 year old looked at me like I had three heads and said, "Then what is the point?" My two older children did not have as much of a problem with the concept as each understand being on a team. However, they were also used to the team competing against another team. Each of my kids had to rethink their moves and remember it was a group effort.

While, I think competition is healthy and it has its place I also know cooperation has a place as well. We are often called on to act in a cooperative manner. Working as a team or making a group effort is a skill every child needs to be taught. The good of a group or the whole is at times more important than individual accomplishments. A family or a church works on the cooperation of the members for the good of the whole body. A healthy perspective on when to compete and when to cooperate is an essential lesson to teach. My family learned an important lesson when we played. They learned that sometimes there is accomplishment by working in a group.

As far as game play, the game is very cute and quite fun. It is fast paced and involves strategy and cooperation to win. Basically playing was a hoot!