Are you able to collaborate with others, work together, achieve something where everyone plays a part? It can be about organising a party, building a den, planning a trip, about coding a new computer program or composing a new pop song. It’s an ambitious goal that requires several people – each one performing different tasks – to reach it.

Being able to collaborate with others, making sure everyone is working towards the same goal and ensuring disagreements are solved in a timely way, is a serious challenge.

You need to be able to listen to others and understand them! (Oh! Wouldn’t that mean empathy and active listening could be helpful? I guess so! If you don’t know what these two ideas are, have a glance at chapter 2…).

You might already have experienced that collaborating with a very good friend or someone else close to you, can be quite easy. When there is already a proximity, a common language, similar ideas and shared interest, it’s not frightening at all to collaborate. Even though you might encounter serious disagreements and even conflicts, a strong friendship often helps to solve issues and move on.

Now, what happens if you need to collaborate with someone who is not a friend? Like someone of a very different age, with different views of the world, different habits, different knowledge and different experiences…
Activities

For the next activities, gather a few people: friends, family members, anyone who wants to play with you. You can play with just one friend, but try also with more people and people you don’t know so well.

It gets trickier and funnier when more people join in!

Activity 1

A Tower of Shadows and Shoes

If it’s a sunny day, go outside with your family or friends and observe your shadows. Now, can the whole group make one unique shadow? You did it! Good.

Let’s go for a challenge:

What is the longest shadow you can make together? Try and experiment with everyone’s ideas... And if it’s a rainy day, move inside and take off your shoes. Now, try building one tower together, using only your shoes! How tall can you make it?

Once again; discuss, experiment, collaborate!

Activity 2

Walk and... STOP!

For the walking game, you can use a room or an outside space, like a park. Everyone may walk in different directions, at a different pace. The goal is to stop walking exactly at the same time. It may be tempting to say “STOP!” or to clap your hands to ensure everyone stops, and you may indeed try this to start with.

However, the activity becomes interesting when you are not allowed to speak or to signal to the others that they should stop. Then, the group can only succeed if everyone pays a huge amount of attention to the others, and tries to “feel” when everyone stops. It will likely take you several attempts and a great deal of concentration before you make it!
Can you and your friends or family tell a story together? Try elaborating on a simple story: who are the main characters? What is the main issue? What is going to happen to the characters?

The challenge in that activity is that you all have to contribute to the story, and most of all that you cannot say “no” to anyone else’s suggestions. If someone has an idea that’s stupid in your opinion, you cannot refuse it! You have to find a way to incorporate it in your story, to build on it so that it does not ruin everything...

However, everyone must try to make the story as good as possible!