The Cooperative Games units address the expectations of the Active Living and the Living Skills strands and in some grades address the Movement Competence strand as well.

What are cooperative games? They are games of acceptance, cooperation and sharing that can bring children, families and communities together in the spirit of cooperative play. The main difference between cooperative games and most other games is that in cooperative games everybody cooperates—everybody wins and nobody loses. Children play with one another rather than against one another. These games eliminate the fear of failure and the feeling of failure. They also reaffirm a child’s confidence in himself or herself as an acceptable and worthy person. The beauty of these games lies in part in their versatility and adaptability. For the most part cooperative games: require little or no equipment; can be played by almost anyone in a variety of settings; and can easily be adapted with rule and equipment modifications. There are four essential components to successful cooperative games: cooperation, acceptance, involvement (everyone plays) and fun.

Adapted from The Cooperative Sports and Games Book: Challenge without Competition (1978), p. 3-7, Terry Orlick, Pantheon; Revised edition.

In these Cooperative Games units, the students will actively and safely participate in a wide variety of cooperative activities that include partner, small and large group activities, while they develop their interpersonal skills (e.g., work cooperatively, communicate positively and demonstrate respect for other students while staying on task and playing fairly). The lessons focus on a variety of activities (e.g., relays, tag games, parachute activities, small and large group challenges and many games of low organization). For a glossary of related terms, please refer to The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education, 2010 (revised).

Teachers can adapt the challenges in the Cooperative Games activities, in addition to those suggested within the lessons, by changing: the quantity of equipment, the number of students per team, the rules of the activity, the size of the playing area, the timelines of the game.

Safety
- Safety, including physical and emotional safety, is an integral part of the health and physical education curriculum. Although teachers have responsibility for following board safety guidelines in matters related to supervision, clothing and footwear, equipment, and facilities, and for applying special rules and instructions, students must also begin to take responsibility from a very young age for their own safety and the safety of others around them at school, at home, and in the community.
• Refer to the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines for the most up-to-date safety requirements.

• Refer to the following activity pages in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines - Elementary Curricular Module:
  o Cooperative Games
  o Movement Activities for Primary Grades.
  o Dodgeball
  o Parachute
  o Relay/Tag games
  o Scooter Boards
  o Skipping
  o And specific sport activity pages (e.g., Team Handball)

• Prior to activity inspect activity area for safe traction and eliminate potential hazardous conditions (e.g., check that floor plugs are in place).

• Explain to students that, before any outdoor activity, they must take responsibility for surveying the area and identifying any risks or hazards and inform the teacher of those risks so they can be controlled.

• Set boundaries for activities a safe distance from walls/barriers.

• Outline the boundaries for the designated activity area to the students.

• Ensure each activity is spread out to minimize interference from other activities.

• Never use walls or corners for stopping points in a game. Use a cone or lines in the activity area as points for stopping or turning.

• In games that require the use of benches, check that they are stable and don’t move when a student is standing on them. Surround benches with mats. If the bench moves or is not stable, modify the game.

• Use balls/object that are appropriate to the skill level of the students.

• Parachute Safety:
  o When using a parachute, teachers must have a method for immediately stopping the activity (e.g., the sound of the whistle means that all students stop moving).
  o Spacing: students should sit equally spaced around the parachute.
  o Establish the correct overhand grip (roll the edge over two or three times) fingers on top, thumbs underneath and hands shoulder-width apart
  o Students warm up by lifting the parachute in unison and bringing it down first from a sitting and then from a standing position. Encourage students to stretch high in the air.
  o Do not shake the parachute when instructions are being given.
  o Go under parachute only when directed to do so
  o Respond to start and stop signals immediately

• When using scooter boards, remind students that they should always be sitting, kneeling or lying on them. Avoid standing on scooter boards or running and pushing scooter boards. Keep fingers and loose clothing away from the wheels.
• In scooter board relay games, allow for a slow-down area.
• Winter Safety:
  o When working with snow and outdoors, wear appropriate clothing (e.g., mittens, hats, and boots).
  o Use snow appropriately
  o Avoid icy areas
• In an activity where students are required to change directions, particularly as the locomotor skills increase in speed, stop before changing direction so that students don’t trip and get dragged along by the momentum of others. Likewise, stop frequently if the momentum becomes uncontrolled as the students build speed in their locomotor movements.
• Remind students to be cautious when moving and to be aware of the personal space of others (e.g., when working with hula hoops).
• Students must be made aware of ways to protect themselves from UV rays (e.g., use of hats, sunglasses, sunscreen).
• Clearly define areas of the body that can be tagged (e.g., arms, back, legs) and instruct students that a tag is a touch not a push, punch or grab.
• Tagging with a pool noodle should be done softly, below the waist. If tagging is done inappropriately, the teacher should appoint a new tagger.
• Prior to using latex balloons check for allergies to latex.

Notes to Teachers
• Work with students to co-construct and develop the vocabulary to help and positively encourage one another. The role modeling of positive language is also important for them.
• Most of these activities include students touching each other. Students can participate in these activities if they are comfortable to work together in this way. Students may require more lead-up activities (found in warm-ups, other lessons and DPA activities) to increase their comfort level with working together, or have students hold a scarf between them or link elbows.
• Discuss the importance of working together in all the activities. Remind students to choose different partners throughout the lessons.
• Repetition is fundamental to learning skills. The more opportunities students have to practise, the more comfortable and proficient they can become. Organize cooperative activities so the students are in small groups and have many chances to practise the skills.
• The use of music can enhance students’ enjoyment when they are at the stations. Stopping and starting the music is a great signal to freeze” or rotate to the next station.
• Stations may require more than one lesson for completion.
• For winter outdoor activities, divide the students into teams prior to going outside. It is important that students are dressed for active participation outside. If weather is not permitting or school policies do not allow, consider using a beanbag rather than snowball in all activities and consider playing indoors.
• When outside create outdoor warm-ups, and develop ways and locations to post information specific to the facility (e.g., taped to pylons, poles/goalposts, walls).
• Have a “stop signal” and a “gather together” signal so the class never becomes too spread out.
• Parachutes:
  o To accommodate various learners, use smaller parachutes to increase student interaction.
  o Always have a plan to deal with students who are nervous about going underneath the parachute. Students always have the right to refuse to go under the parachute.
• Scooter Boards:
  o Review with students how to stack the scooterboards at the end of class.
  o Ask students to sit with the boards in their laps or with the boards upside down on the floor in front of them (park position) when giving instructions.
• Asking students to provide reasons for their decisions when assessing their own participation helps to clarify the Success Criteria for assessment. Discussing indicators clarifies the targets for both students and teachers.
• Note that the evaluation of all students in the culminating tasks may take more than one class to complete (e.g., it may take multiple classes for all groups to share their games and provide adequate play time).
• When creating anecdotal notes, consider only recording notes for 6 – 10 students per class. Ensure that students are aware of the Success Criteria and the students observed vary from class to class to ensure you eventually observe and provide direct feedback to all students.
• The rubrics provided allow teachers to select a variety of options for evaluation. It is not expected that all the active participation, safety, fitness and living skills on the rubrics will be evaluated in one unit.