

Taking Turns

Many young children find it difficult to learn to wait, share and take turns.

A child with a communication difficulty may find it particularly hard to accept the rules of turn-taking and sharing.

These skills should be encouraged early on, to help develop an understanding of the rules of conversational turn-taking.

When taking turns...

1. To start with, work on turn-taking when you are alone with your child. It is much harder to learn to share with two or three other children.
2. Make sure there are **no distractions**, e.g. turn off the television and your phone.
3. Get your child's attention by sitting close together and **face to face**.
4. To make sure that your child does take turns, be in control of the situation by keeping hold of the equipment/toys being used.
5. Demonstrate the activity first so that your child understands what is required.
6. Use the appropriate signed or spoken language for turn-taking, e.g. "**my turn... your turn**".
7. Give lots of praise for good waiting. Start with very short turns to begin with and gradually increase the length of the turn.
8. If your child is reluctant to take turns, let them have two turns for every one that you have.
9. If your child is still unwilling to take turns, remove the toy altogether and come back to it later when they are more willing to co-operate.
10. Once your child can take turns with an adult, include another child who is good at taking turns in the games you play together. Over time, have more children join the group.

Turn taking activities to try...

Swapping Toys

Two different toys, e.g. a rattle and a squeaky toy
Give your child one toy and let them play with it for a while.

Then offer your child the second toy, but only give them the second toy when the first one is returned. This activity helps your child to learn how to give and take.

Give and Take Games

The following toys can be used to encourage turn-taking and sharing:

- ⇒ Throw balls and bean bags to each other
- ⇒ Send wind up toys back and forth
- ⇒ Roll cars towards each other
- ⇒ Post a shape in the box
- ⇒ Take turns to roll a ball to knock down skittles
- ⇒ Take turns to lift up the flap of books
- ⇒ Take turns to add a brick to make a tower



Everyday Sharing

There are many opportunities to encourage turn-taking and sharing during everyday routines, particularly if there are brothers and sisters. E.g.

- ⇒ Taking turns to stir the cake mix
 - ⇒ Taking turns on the swing
 - ⇒ Taking turns sharing with toys
- ⇒ Taking turns to water the garden with a small watering can
 - ⇒ Taking turns to brush your hair and wash your face
 - ⇒ Taking turns to clap hands