

Starting school

Sharing and turn taking



Learning to share and take turns are important skills for children to develop when getting ready for starting school. At school, they will have many opportunities to share and take turns with new toys and activities. They may need to wait for their turn to use a toy, or complete an activity, which is a skill that takes a bit of practice. Children who have developed these skills prior to starting school often find it easier to cope with these opportunities emotionally and they get more out of the learning experience.

At home, you can support your child by demonstrating taking turns and sharing. By reinforcing this daily, your child can develop and refine these skills and will be more confident in taking turns and sharing with other children. By encouraging your child to share things with you, their siblings and other family members and to take turns in completing a task, they will be more confident and happy when asked to share and take turns at school. This will also support them with making friends and help them form good relationships.

What can I do to help my child to share and take turns?

Be a good role model

Let them see you sharing and taking turns with others.

Talk about sharing and taking turns

Give good examples of when they have shared.

Read books about friendships and talk about how the characters shared and took turns

This introduces the child to different situations without being involved. 'The smartest giant in town' by Julia Donaldson is a great example of a story of sharing where the giant shares all of his smart clothes with those in need!

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Role play

When playing with your child, introduce sharing scenarios between your character and theirs. Help them make the right decision through positive conversation.

Sharing boxes

Create a box for your child and their sibling/or yourself. Encourage your child to sort the toys into each box – for example two cars in one box and two cars in the other. Encourage them to play with the items in their box and if they want to, they can trade. Or treats – sharing sweets or vegetable sticks – this will support their numeracy by counting out how many to each bowl.

Cooking at home

Encourage everyone in the house to participate in baking or making dinner. Write down the list of jobs and get your child to delegate all the jobs out – even the washing up! It allows families and siblings to work together and the adults to role modelling sharing and turn taking.

Board games

These are great to support children in taking turns and waiting for others. Make sure they are age appropriate and the wait time between turns is only a few minutes to keep your child's concentration.

Visual timers

These are helpful when introducing the concept of having to wait for their turn. In nursery we often use sand timers for popular experiences such as computer time. We appreciate you might not have one at home, but you can use a clock which would help them begin to understand the concept of time. Use terminology such as “when the big hand gets to number four, you can have your turn” Or “when this number changes to a five, you can have your turn” This is a good way to resolve conflict over toys.

When planning activities to encourage your child to share, you need to bear in mind that children may find this difficult and it is not a concept that they are suddenly going to grasp straight away. They need to be supported and given lots of opportunities to practice their sharing and turn taking. It is your role to guide them in the right direction and not force them to share. Remember to be patient; their skills will gradually develop the more opportunities they are given.



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Bubbles

This is good for developing your child's ability to following instructions and their attention and listening skills, as well as allowing them to take turns with you or a sibling.

You will need:

- Some bubbles

Begin by blowing bubbles and explain that your child can't pop them until you say, "Ready! Steady! POP!" If your child has a sibling, then encourage them to do this by taking turns to pop the bubbles rather than at the same time. If they don't, reverse roles with your child blowing the bubbles and you popping them.



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Following instructions to stop and go!

This will support your child in listening skills, following adult direction and turn taking.

You will need:

- Space or a back garden.

Begin by everyone running around in a big circle. After a few seconds, shout, "STOP!" You freeze in an exaggerated pose, which your child will probably start to copy if you do this every time you stop. After a short time, say, "Go!" and everyone runs again, until you say, "Stop!" And so on. To promote turn taking, everyone in the family takes their turn of saying stop and go. To build anticipation, sing songs before you shout go - they know you are going to say "go", but they don't know when! You can also increase the length of time that they have to wait for you to say go.



School readiness

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Ladybird game

This will support your child in turn taking, recognising numbers and quantities and their fine motor skills.

You will need:

- Paper and pens
- A dice

The dice has six numbers on it. Each number represents a piece of the ladybird's body and they can only add this to their ladybird when they throw the corresponding number on the dice. You need to roll a 1 to start with because you need a body to begin with. Encourage your child to count the spots on the dice to see which number they have thrown – start counting out loud and then encourage them to do this in their head. Using the pen and paper, your child can draw their ladybird. Begin playing just you and your child. Once they get the idea you can invite other family members to play which will increase the waiting time.

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| 1 | Ladybug's body | 4 | Ladybug's feelers |
| 2 | Ladybug's head | 5 | Ladybug's eyes |
| 3 | Ladybug's legs | 6 | Ladybug's spots |

