

Helping Turn Taking Skills in Play – Developing Skills

Taking Turns

Your child is beginning to engage in turn taking for longer periods of time. They are indicating to you that they like the activity and are requesting it to continue through various different ways. For example;

- Looking at you more often and consistently during the activity
- Making sounds and smiling at you
- Using an action or gesture such as a sign to show you they want to keep playing

Taking turns is becoming easier for your child and they are learning that sharing and taking turns together can be a fun experience.

Things for you to consider

- Having a very clear structure in place will help children in the beginning to learn the routines of taking turns. This helps them to cope with the 'unexpectedness' of having to give the item or toy to somebody else. This way they know that it will come back to them at some point.
- Think about the wait time for the child e.g. waiting for a turn at bubbles is shorter than waiting for a turn on a bike
- Try to use moderately interesting activities. If something is highly motivating this might be too difficult to wait for. Equally if something is not interesting your child might move away as it isn't worth waiting for
- Stick to the structure – it has to be very clear and fair so that your child does learn the sequence of taking a turn.

Activity ideas to develop turn taking skills

- Skittles / bowling
- Parachute games
- Marble run
- Pass the parcel
- Musical bumps / statues / hats / chairs
- Tunnel runs
- Catch, kicking or rolling a ball to each other
- Commercially available games such as Hungry Hippos, Buckaroo
- Fishing game
- Inset puzzles

- Scribbling / drawing / colouring on a page – take it in turns to doodle on a page
- Wind-up toys and cars – send wind up cars back and forth to each other
- Vehicles – as above take it in turns to send a vehicle back and forth to each other
- Down the ramp / through the tunnel – take it in turns to push a car down a chute or through the tunnel
- Hide and seek – take it in turns to hide

How to help?

At this stage your child may be indicating to you consistently that they want a turn. This could be by using a word such as 'more', 'again' 'go' or an action.

To extend their skills further you can try;

- Using key phrases within the activity e.g. '(child's name) turn', '(adults name) turn'
- Pausing and waiting for your child to use their indicator that they want a turn
- Say what you are playing with e.g. 'balloon' and adding a word e.g. 'more balloon'
- Cuing them in by using non-verbal cues e.g. leaning forward and waiting, looking expectantly at them
- Using 'Ready Steady ___' and waiting for them to say 'go' or use their action

If you have any questions then please contact your Speech and Language Therapist.