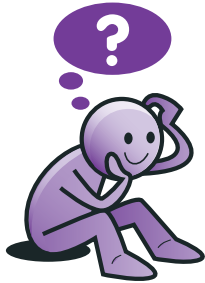


Section 5.3

Learning to play with a friend

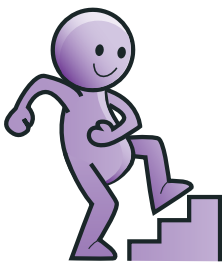


Why is this important?

Social play is an important part of children learning to become sociable and develop friendships (i.e. realising that they are not alone in their environment – there are other people with feelings, needs and wants too!). Children increase in communicative confidence as new skills are practised by watching and playing with others in a relatively safe/familiar environment. Social play is key to social and emotional development.

What to do

- Engage two children in identical play at a table or on the floor. Activities could be drawing, sticking, puzzles.
- Build a tower where both children have some bricks and take turns to put one on the tower. Start by guiding the activity and slowly move away to enable the children to continue.
- Equipment that requires two children (e.g. see-saws/double swings) are useful, as are toys that require ‘help’ (e.g. pushing each other in a car).
- Play hide-and-seek or ball games.



Step up

- Suggest an activity to the children and have less involvement yourself.
- Keep watching from a distance.
- Offer a choice of shared activities so that the children can become more self-directed.

Step down

- Adult participation helps so that if problems occur they can be quickly rectified. They can also help to keep the action going.
- Use fewer bricks in the tower so that the activity doesn’t become too long.
- Use vocabulary that the children can follow to guide them (e.g. ‘George’s turn’, ‘Sharna’s turn’).
- Refer to the other child by saying ‘Look what Zain’s doing, he’s drawing a picture’.

