

Section 6.5

Playing sociably and learning to share

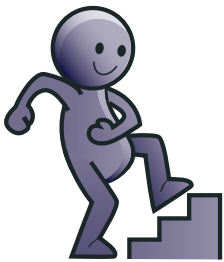


Why is this important?

Social play takes place in a natural environment, allowing children to develop and practise their communication skills. To be successful, children need to understand the rules of turn-taking and sharing. This forms the foundation of social-interaction skills for later life.

What to do

- Provide opportunities for the child to engage in play activities with other children of similar ages by involving the child in playgroups, nursery school, parent and toddler groups and visiting places where other children play (e.g. the park).
- Set up activities where two children can play together (e.g. home corner, playing shops, a simple game, taking turns to complete a puzzle).
- Suggest things that one child could give to another (e.g. one child cooking, the other putting the doll to bed; suggest child one heats a bottle of milk for child two to give to doll).



Step up

- Reduce the involvement of an adult (e.g. encourage the children to play cooperatively together while you do something else).
- Act out simple stories together with a few children where each child's role depends on another.
- Consider a more ambitious project (e.g. making cards, cookery).
- Demonstrate what sharing means using puppets: talk about what it *means* to take turns and share.

Step down

- Play with the child as another child would, so that you can introduce the ideas of sharing and taking turns.
- Practise asking for objects/toys, etc. rather than 'just taking them'.
- If two children want the same toy, set a timer so one child has it for two minutes, then passes the toy to the other child.
- Use reward stickers and verbal praise as tangible rewards for good sharing/turn-taking/cooperative play, etc.

