

Social games and turn taking activities

These activities promote sharing attention, turn taking and exposure to everyday language. Making time to plan some of these activities with your child will support their development of playing alongside their family and friends. It also helps with recognition of others and enjoying being together socially without pressure.

Early turn taking activities

The foundations of having a conversation begin with early turn taking. This means that you respond to your child when they make a sound or a gesture and then they may do this back to you. This is the beginning of turn taking. Turn taking in every day play and activities helps your child develop the ability to wait and allow others to join in. You can do turn taking in almost any play activity (such as hair brushing; tidying up; cooking/baking; reading a book with flaps; posting toys into a box). It is important to respond to your child's interactions and modelling waiting for your turn when waiting for their response.

Simple social games

Start with games that are very predictable, are easy to understand the rules which keep anxiety levels lower and enjoyment levels higher, thus allowing you to expand the game when appropriate. Some examples include:

- A simple chase/tickling game
- Musical chairs
- Peek-a-boo
- Rolling a ball/car to each other

When you're playing with your child during these activities, after a few "goes" of the activity, start to leave a pause before you interact with your child. This provides your child an *opportunity* to communicate with you that they want more of the fun! They may communicate with you by looking at you; making a sound, touching your hand or saying a word. You can respond by saying "You want more?" and then continuing the fun.

During play you can start to say "My turn" and "Your turn", and repeat this during the change of turn taking so that you are teaching your child the social rules. Remember, when you have a conversation with someone you take turns to speak. This is teaching your child the skills to turn take that will later help with developing conversations. You can also introduce visuals here such as a "My turn" card that gets passed between you to show whose turn it is.

Small group social games

You can then build on longer social games and turn taking by introducing friends, another adult or siblings into the turn taking activity. Again, continue to reiterate the importance of the turn taking and praise your child for waiting for their turn. Below are some examples.

Pirate pop up; Buckaroo; Simon says; Passing ball/car activities in a larger group; Building a tower.