

Importance of Turn-Taking

Why is Turn-Taking important?

Interaction with another person is two-way. We take turns a lot during an interaction. This may be through words, gestures, body language etc. The majority of games and group activities involve turn taking. It is essential to learn how to take turns to develop communication skills and be able to interact and have fun with other people.

How to help



Switch off or move right away from the TV, radio, phone, iPad, computer

Remove general distractions from the room or area– this may include other toys.

Watch to see what the child wants to do/play with.

If the child has not chosen toys, sit opposite them and copy their actions or sounds. When you have copied the child a number of times try to incorporate pausing into the game, to encourage the child to wait for you. If you are copying actions, label whose turn it is, for example, 'Jake's turn', 'Daddy's turn'.

If the child has chosen a toy, initially spend time watching them. If the child involves you in any way, for example by looking at you, try and join in with the child's play by quickly having a turn in their game and saying whose turn it is, for example, 'Mummy's/Mrs Smith's turn', 'Josh's turn'.

Try to increase the number of times you are able to have another turn.

Gradually increase the number of people who are taking turns.

Once the child has the idea of taking turns try to develop this into other games. Some ideas might be,

- **rolling a ball to each other**
- **building a tower together**
- **jumping together**
- **banging a drum – start with a beater each and then develop to having one beater to share.**
- **taking turns to post pictures or shapes or to put in a piece of an inset puzzle**

