



Turn Taking and Waiting

Turn taking skills and learning how to wait are critical skills needed to develop cooperative play skills. Unfortunately waiting is a required everyday in life...waiting in line, waiting to get mom's attention, waiting while someone else is talking, waiting for a turn during play. As boring as it is, taking turns and knowing how to wait goes a long way.

Teach Turn Taking during PLAY:

As a parent you must learn how to engineer the activity to facilitate targeted behavior and language. So to elicit turn taking behaviors...hoarding works great! For example if you have cars and a ramp, you eventually are holding all the cars so your child has to wait for a turn or ask. Other toys may include windup toys, trains & tracks or bubbles with different blow wands.

Beware! Interfering with your child's turn may stimulate initial frustration and some grabbing". That's O.K. Acknowledge emotions and remind your child of the rule. This is how they learn the behavior that is expected of them. Let's say your child is getting annoyed since you have all the trains and it's your turn to steer them over the bridge. Be encouraging. You may say, "I know, it's hard to wait, but I want to play too." "Yes, it's frustrating..Almost done...now, your turn..Great waiting!" Let your child know their turn is coming soon and it's not the end of the game...model prompts such as, "My turn, then your turn." "1 more then you go", "Good waiting, your turn next."

The RULE & Model

Model the rule and what's expected. "No grabbing...hands down." "Tell me "my turn"". "You need to wait." It's important to outline the "rule" and demonstrate the targeted behavior. Remember that waiting is hard for your child and it may trigger impulsivity and /or some emotions. Be careful to watch for the tipping point. Try to keep the fun and positive. Use gestures to help communicate your intent. Point to yourself, point to your child as you model turns. Be patient, sometimes turn taking is perceived as "someone is taking away my toy".

Express Key Words, Other Models for Turn Taking & Waiting

"Let's take turns", "You go, then me," "I go next", "My turn...your turn" "Good sharing". "I'm done...now you do it" "OK now me...and you watch".

To sustain play and interactive skills it is important for children to not only know how to request desired toys to initiate play but to allow another person to take a turn, wait, sustain joint focus (vs. playing with another object) until they get another turn. It takes practice to establish these behaviors. Be sure to set up some play times where you have time to structure some turn taking opportunities.