

Communication Skills: Turn Taking

Definition of Turn Taking

One person doing an activity is followed by another person doing an activity with a shared focus. This can develop over a number of turns. Turn taking is the foundation skill for having conversations. It will also help with developing social play and interaction skills.

Many children have difficulties in taking turns. Usually children develop taking turns in the following way.

- Firstly they will take turns in simple physical or social play
- Later turns can be taken with toys or objects
- Even later turn taking is used with talking, whether this is through gestures, words or pictures.
- Finally turns are taken in conversation where each person has several turns each.

Ideas for Activities

- Simple physical or social play
 - Jumping in turns
 - Pat – a – cake
 - Splashing in the bath
 - Chase/ tig games
 - Hiding
 - Making faces, noises, movements
 - Splashing in puddles, kicking leaves.
 - Peek –a– boo e.g. using hands, blanket, behind a chair
 - Songs with actions, e.g. “The wheels on the bus”
 - Clapping
 - Rough and tumble games, e.g. tickling each other
- Turns with toys, objects
 - Building a tower of bricks
 - Rolling a ball to each other
 - Pushing a car to each other
 - Posting shapes or other objects e.g. clothes into the washing machine, shape sorter, cereal box with a hole in it
 - Pressing buttons, knobs on push button, pop up toys
 - Placing rings on a stacker, other stacking toys
 - Turning pages in a book
 - Blowing bubbles
 - Shaking, banging musical instruments or home made sound makers
 - Feeding dolls, teddies
 - Doing a puzzle
 - Passing a bag around a group to pull something out or pass the parcel
 - Rolling a ball to knock skittles over

- Turns with talking in structured activities
 - Naming, describing things or events in a book
 - Pulling objects or object pictures out of bag and describing them including group name, e.g. animals, what you do with the item, where you find and who might have one. Turning over, face down, pictures of people doing different actions [verb pictures] and name or describe them.
 - Pulling out pre written questions from a bag and asking the question
 - Pulling out written question words from a bag and making up a question with the word
 - Lotto game – requesting pictures to fill your board
 - Memory games, e.g. My Gran went to market and bought
 - Describing what you like and don't like e.g. toys, foods, places, people, hobbies
 - Describing what you are good at and not so good at
 - Listen to a story to retell it each saying a 'line' in the story [if needed turn the pages as the story is told]
 - Each person to say a line from a nursery rhyme
 - Take it in turns to count. You could make it harder by, e.g. counting in 2's or 3's. Say the letters of the alphabet. You could make this harder by each person saying e.g. an animal or food that begins with each letter.