



# Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

## When and How Does Mine Become Ours

How many times a day do you hear the word "Mine," "I want!," or "Give me!?" These words, besides "mama" and "dada", are some of the first words children use explains Peter Blake, Ed.D., a developmental psychologist. It is very common and age-appropriate for children to express themselves by using these words. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), tells us that children who are younger than 3 cannot understand the idea of sharing. In fact, child development specialists explain that sharing skills usually do not appear until around 3.5 to 4 years of age.

While your first impulse may be to say "share your toy," you may want to reinforce **turn taking** instead. Taking turns is a precursor to sharing and can start very early before the child is able to speak. Taking turns means to alternate and is referred to when play goes back and forth between children. Sharing means the child may or may not get the object back.

When your child is with a sibling or other children, whether it is taking turns or teaching children to share, here are some guidelines to help:

- ♥ Have enough of the same toys that the children like (e.g., multiple riding toys, blocks, stuffed animals).
- ♥ Talk about keeping favorite toys or possessions at home or keeping it in a place where she does not need to share, for example in her backpack.
- ♥ Incorporate taking turns throughout the day during routine activities. For example, you can say things like "Today is Maile's turn to pass out the napkins" or "Kai, can you choose a book for us to read today?"



In this newsletter we will discuss the 6 stages of play development and strategies to teach young children to take turns at each age level.

### This newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of your child's development by doing these activities together,
- ♥ **Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

# Infants

Understanding the 6 social play stages is important so we do not try to force taking turns or sharing too early, before the child is ready socially or emotionally. It is important to remember that all children develop and progress at her own pace, so children of the same age may not show the same types of social play in sequence.

The infant social play development stages are:

## ♥ Unoccupied Play (Birth - 3 months)

This type of play sets the foundation for all other stages of play. Infants are non-mobile and there is no structure to their play. During unoccupied play, young infants explore materials and their own bodies, allowing them to practice manipulating materials, mastering self-control, and learning about how their world works.

## ♥ Solitary Play (Birth - 2 Years)

Solitary play happens when children entertain themselves without any outside social interaction. Children in this type of play may not acknowledge other children that are close to them.



You can start introducing turn taking activities with your infant by introducing words that talk about taking turns. Use words such as "my," "yours," and "please" when doing activities.

## Activity for Infants: *My Turn, Your Turn*

What You Need:

A toy or object that the infant plays with.

What to Do:

1. Sit with your infant on the floor while she is playing with a toy or other object. Tap your chest and say "My turn" and hold out your hand.
2. If she gives the toy or object to you, say with excitement "Thank you for sharing!"
3. Help her make the gesture and encourage her to say "My turn."
4. Say to her "Your turn" and quickly give it back to her.



You can do this all day as your infant is playing with other toys or objects. Taking turns and sharing take years of practice and must be repeated often. As she gets older you can increase the time that she is waiting for a turn (e.g., Count to 5 or 10).

*(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)*

# Toddlers

Since toddlers are just at the beginning stages of engaging with someone else in play, they often find it easier to first take turns with adults. While incorporating turn taking activities, emphasize that she will get the object back.

The toddler social development play stages are:

## ♥ Spectator/Onlooker (2 Years)

The active participation of this type of play is watching other children play. Children learn a lot by watching others play. As they observe others in play, they learn social rules of play and relationships.

## ♥ Parallel Play (2+Years)

Children play near or next to each other but do not necessarily interact with each other. In this stage of play the focus is on the material and not on the other child or children. During parallel play 2-year-olds are practicing skills and learning the beginning stages of engaging with someone else in play.

Here are some activities that you can do with toddlers to introduce turn taking:

- ♥ While playing a game, introduce the concept and words of turn taking. For example, roll a ball or car back and forth while saying, "Your turn, my turn."



- ♥ Add communication skills when teaching turn taking by adding gestures and words. For example, tap your chest and say, "My turn" and then help her make the gesture or say the words.

## Activity for Toddlers: *Waiting Hands*

What You Need:

None

What to Do:

1. Help your toddler practice clasping her hands together and say "waiting hands."
2. When you are taking turns and it is not her turn, you can say, "my turn, show me your waiting hands." Start off by counting to 5 depending on the age of the toddler.
3. Help the child focus on her waiting hands while she is waiting for her turn.



*(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)*

# Preschoolers

As preschoolers start to interact and play with others, you can introduce and reinforce the concepts of sharing. This concept will still be hard for children to master, so consistent modeling and calling attention to good examples of sharing will help.

The preschooler social development play stages are:

## ♥ Associative Play (3 - 4 years)

The focus of play shifts from the activity or materials to the other players. This play allows children to practice what they have learned through watching and playing next to other children. Social play is now beginning to happen during this play stage.

## ♥ Cooperative Play (4+ years)

This stage of play is categorized as cooperative play between children. Children begin to establish roles in play, and initiate taking turns and sharing. This type of play is an advanced skill and can be difficult for young children.



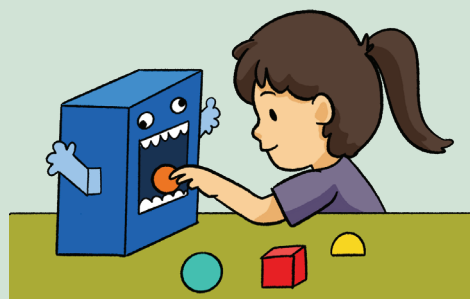
Here are some ways that you can begin to teach children to share:

- ♥ Introduce the language of sharing by encouraging preschoolers to say, "Can I play with it when you are finished?" or "You can have a turn when I am done."
- ♥ Use a timer. Tell the children that when the timer goes off it is time for the other child to have a turn. Set the timer for no more than 2 minutes at first. This takes time and practice.

## Activity for Preschoolers: *Feed the Monster*

What You Need:

- Small cardboard box with a hole cut out for a mouth.
- Glue
- Items to decorate the monster such as paper triangles for teeth, paper circles for eyes.
- Small items to share with the monster: e.g., small toys or pretend food



What to Do:

1. Create the monster by cutting a hole in a small cardboard box
2. Decorate the monster with paper eyes and teeth.
3. Each child takes a turn sharing by feeding the monster some of their toys.
4. Say to the child, "You are sharing your toys when you are feeding the monster. You have some and the monster has some that you gave him."

*(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)*

## How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

### Physical Development

- ♥ Learn to use her body with intention
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

### Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Learn to interact with others
- ♥ Learn to cooperate with others

### Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Build verbal skills, vocabulary, and use of descriptive language
- ♥ Learn to ask and answer questions

### Cognitive Development

- ♥ Increase her observation, listening, and understanding skills
- ♥ Develop her thinking and problem-solving skills



## Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons such as math (quantities, measurement), science (how matter changes), fine motor (stirring, pouring), and literacy (print awareness). As you make this recipe with your child, talk about kitchen safety. Show her how to handle items safely and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Praise her efforts, and ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Most of all, have fun!

### Snack Mix to Share

Adapted from <https://www.hawaiianelectric.com/recipes/find-a-recipe/halloween-snack-mix>

Ingredients:

- 1 cup honey flavored cereal
- 1 cup chocolate cheerio cereal
- 1 cup salted roasted peanuts
- 1 cup chocolate candies with candy shell (i.e. Reese's pieces)
- 1 cup mini twisted salted pretzels
- 1 cup raisins



Directions:

1. Take turns with your keiki while adding all the ingredients together in a large bowl. As the child adds each ingredient, talk about the shapes and colors as well as the tastes and smells.
2. Mix the ingredients to combine.
3. Store in several air tight container to maintain freshness.
4. Model the concept of sharing by taking her to deliver trail mix to friends and family. Makes 7 cups.

## Resources

### ***Helping Young Children with Sharing***

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resource/helping-young-children-with-sharing/>

This short article will give you more ideas for supporting young children in learning to share.

### ***Supporting Young Children's Friendships***

<https://pbskids.org/video/daniel-tigers-neighborhood/2310384533>

This 2.5-minute video by PBS Kids features Daniel the tiger and his friend who wants to play with Daniel's favorite car. Sharing is hard sometimes. Watch this video with your child.



## Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the **Hawai'i State Public Library** [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org).

### **Infants and Toddlers**

#### ***I Can Share* by Karen Katz**

This book features simple, repetitive text and adorable illustrations of toddlers. This playful little book is the perfect way to introduce the magic of sharing.

#### ***Sharing Time* by Elizabeth Verdick**

A simple board book to introduce the idea and concepts of sharing.

### **Preschoolers**

#### ***Should I Share My Ice Cream?* by Mo Willems**

Gerald the Elephant has some choices to make, but he better hurry before it is too late. An introduction to sharing with friends.

#### ***Llama Llama Time to Share* by Jane Yolen & Mark Teague**

Llama Llama has a new friend come to his house to play. Everything is going fine until he has a hard time sharing.



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