

How to support turn taking

Turn taking and sharing are complex social skills that your child/ young person may find difficult to understand. By encouraging your child to participate in turn taking and sharing, you can teach them understand these concepts.

We should be prepared to teach and re-teach this skill several times, and even then there will be times when reminders are needed. Persistence and consistency is key. Turn-taking is a tricky skill to learn at first and so adults need to be consistent in the tools they are using. They should apply tools in a range of settings and activities (e.g. turn taking in class, turn taking during a game, with a toy, to complete a step within an activity etc.)

How to support turn taking (easier)

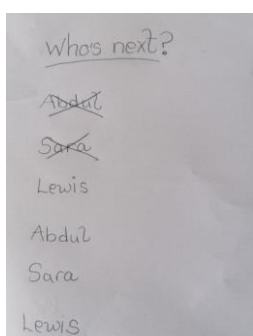
Start within an activity that is fun but not necessarily the child's most favourite. If it's their favourite they will really struggle to give it up or share it.

- Start with a physical object as opposed to a game with dice or playing cards. This helps clarify in a very concrete way whose turn it is.
- Begin practising in activities that have quick short turns (such as: throwing a ball, blowing the bubbles, pushing the car etc.). This is so the child does not need to wait for a long time.
- Use a communication book/ touch cues/ to support your communication (mummy's turn, Tina's turn) – label each time
- Having lots of turns and consistency will begin to support the child to trust that the object/activity will be provided back to them soon after another person has had their go.

Turn Taking Boards (harder)

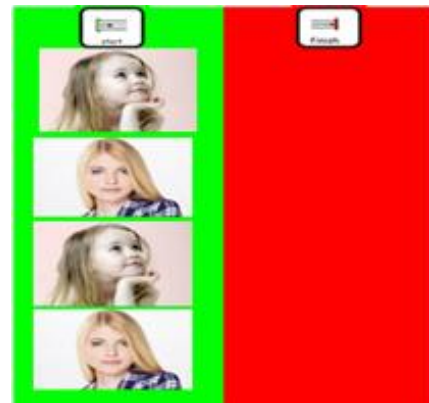
Turn-taking boards provide visual cues to support children to anticipate and accept when their turn is next.

You can presents turn-taking boards in different ways and could use photos of the children/adult in the group, symbols, pictures or even written names if reading skills are good. See examples of different turn-taking boards:



Written turn taking board for older students with good reading. Name is crossed out to mark the end of a turn.

Velcro photos on a turn taking board with a start and finished column. Photos moves across when a turn has finished.



Tips when using a turn taking board

- Decide which type of board will be most appropriate for the child or young person. Which will be easiest to understand and clear?
- Present at the beginning of an activity. Model you taking a turn and using the board and then give to child. 'First Daddy' Next Tina's turn,
- At the end of each turn mark the end of the turn using the board (e.g. moving the photo across, crossing the name out, putting the name in the finished pouch etc.)

Next Steps :

- During the activity ask children 'Whose turn is next?' and show them using the board. You can see if they can use the tool to tell you themselves.
- Start practising turn-taking with more people. Turn-taking with an adult may be easier at first than with a sibling

If the child is still struggling?

- If the child is struggling after lots of practise consider the following steps:
 - Using a turn taking song alongside the board to mark the start and end of the turn (e.g. it's Tina's turn, it's Tina's turn, It's Tina's turn to play.....Tina's turn has finished, it's time to give it away 3-2-1 give)
 - Use consistent language and countdown e.g. '5-4-3-2-1: Finished'
 - If giving to another person is too tricky (even with physical support) dropping the item into an empty container may be an easier step.
 - Revert to the easier version or Intensive interaction (see handout)

For further advice contact your child's speech and language therapist or class teacher



