



Next Steps

Helping you with common toddler and child behaviours

Top Tips For Sharing

Learning to share is an important part of your child's development but it can be a complex thing for them to learn.

It requires lots of social skills such as understanding how someone else feels, wanting to please someone else and understanding that your toy will come back to you.

If you have more than one child, you might find yourself refereeing sharing squabbles over and over.

Try these 'Top Tips' for sharing

Stay close – Watching and keeping close by can mean you can help sharing and stop any problems before they occur.

Model sharing - If your child sees you sharing with them and others, they are more likely to share themselves. Sharing a snack together, sharing some crayons when drawing and talking about sharing are a great start.

Encourage sharing games and activities - Many activities encourage sharing but the trick to avoiding scuffles is to start with just a few minutes at a time. Playing with just a few cars, crayons or bricks can be great to begin with. Keep close and help with sharing if your child is getting frustrated and praising their attempts at sharing no matter how unhappy they are.

Catch the snatch – Gently reminding your child that “we’re sharing” and to ask if they want a particular toy can be helpful if they start to get upset. Remind them that they can have their toy back in a minute and that there’s other toys here to play with.

Tell your child what they need to be doing – “Johnny, stop snatching the crayon, it’s Jenny’s turn”. “Give it back and let her finish colouring the tree. Here’s the yellow one let’s colour the sun”. This helps to keep your child on track and to let them know why they’re sharing and something to do while waiting.



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'Top Tips' for sharing cont.

Praise - Telling your child how well they are doing can make a huge difference to them wanting to share. Simple phrases such as “Wow, Johnny you’re sharing really nicely with Peter”, “I’m really proud of you for sharing your train, I know it’s your favourite” or “Thank you for sharing your snack, I love strawberries” can really help your child feel good about themselves and improve their self-esteem.

It takes time - This is a difficult skill to learn and it’s going to take time for your child to learn. You might come across hiccups in the road where your child goes back to not sharing well again, for example at someone else’s house or at school. Don’t worry your child will learn with just a little time and patience. You’re doing a great job.

Troubleshooting

Have a consequence for not sharing - Take the toy and give it to the other child and explain why. “Johnny you are still snatching, Jenny will now have the crayons for the next five minutes until you can share nicely”. You can then return the toy to your child after the time has passed. Ignore shouting, protests or complaints, no matter how dramatic. Return the toy once time has passed and let your child carry on with the activity.

Setting up separate activities - If your child is really struggling with sharing or a very young child is not sharing well with an older sibling setting up separate activities with plenty of space between them can help. Sometimes you just can’t spend every moment watching them.

Treat visitors children the same - Sharing can often go wrong when other children come into your home and undo all your good work. Talking to other parents and explaining how you manage sharing in your home can help avoid problems.

Treat both siblings the same – making your sharing rules clear to all children can avoid a frustrated older child if a little one is snatching, or an upset younger child if a bigger older sibling is snatching their toys.



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