

13 tips to support children in sharing and social relationships

We believe fostering good social relationships is based on cooperation/sharing and negotiation.

Our tips will encourage children to flourish through practitioner-led practice of negotiating rules, sharing ideas and cooperating when sharing resources and activities, cooperating with ideas, or negotiating the rules of the play, sharing ideas, negotiating roles being assigned and how the play evolves and develops.

Points to consider:

1. Start with games that build on existing or emerging skills
2. Offer activities and resources that encourage social play rather than individual play
3. During turn taking games, make sure that every child has a turn
4. Build “taking turns” into all areas of play such as stacking bricks, sliding down the slide, racing a car down the track and filling buckets of sand
5. Role model to children the positive ways of sharing and turn taking
6. Limit waiting time for children, especially at mealtimes and during activities
7. Use positive language to praise children when they share, take turns or are kind to someone
8. Implement “Daily Helpers” for tasks such as setting the table, getting resources for activities, tidying up, and settling new children into the group
9. Measure turn taking time with a timer or song
10. Talk about feelings and how it feels if nobody shares
11. Provide opportunities for developing empathy
12. Practice problem solving, for example, 'we only have three and all four of you would like a go, what shall we do? How can we solve this?' Support the children to come up with a range of solutions and to agree on one together
13. Recognising situations when sharing is not always appropriate, for example, if a child is engaged with building a tower and needs the bricks to complete their building task.

