



Sharing



Figuring It Out Together

Sharing is about being fair, taking turns, and being aware of another person’s needs and feelings. It is a life skill that will take your child time to learn. Be patient, give your child lots of time to practice and, most important of all, show your child that you share.

Look at Sharing Through Your Child’s Eyes

Looking through your child’s eyes can give you a sense of how much there is to learning to share. Toddlers and 2-year-old children don’t understand what it means to share. Everything belongs to them. Learning to share includes the following:



Understand you are a person – apart from your toys.

For many toddlers and twos, when a friend takes their ball or truck or doll, it feels like a threat. It feels like part of themselves is taken.



Manage emotions.

Toddlers and twos are often overwhelmed by big feelings, like when a friend takes something or has something they really want. Children this age are just beginning to learn how to talk about and manage their feelings.



Express empathy or understand someone else wants or needs something.

Most children don’t really have a firm hold on this skill until about age 6.

So, for now...encourage but do not expect your toddler to share. Don’t force sharing. Instead, promote sharing, support sharing, and show her what sharing looks like and how rewarding it can be.



Encourage and Model Sharing



Model sharing.

Because you are so important to her, she wants to be like you. Let her see you share with other adults. Share with her often by offering her a piece of your sandwich or peach. Take turns zooming her truck.



Notice when your child shares.

"I notice you shared your boat with Frank. He was very happy. That was kind of you."



Point out when others share.

Explain, "That was very kind when Lisa shared her markers with you."



Expect *selective sharing*.

For example, it may be easier for a 3-year-old to share with a baby than with a peer. Your child watches what you do and sees that you do not always choose to share. Sorting out when to share and when to say no takes time.



Reassure your child that some things are just for her and that's OK.

Things like her favorite stuffed animal or other *lovey* or the book from her grandparents are special and do not need to be shared.



Introduce a *timer or countdown* to mark times for friends to exchange and share toys.

It can be easier to respond to a *bing* than to an adult saying it is time to share.



Give her and her friends a chance to work things out.

Stay nearby in case they need assistance.



Tell stories or read books about animal and people friends who share.

Talk about how it feels to share and to have someone share with you. Invite your child to share her story about sharing.