

# Activities for Developing Turn Taking Skills



- **Take it easy**  
Establish the basic rules of turn taking by using simple activities such as:  
Building a tower of bricks together; Rolling a ball to each other
- **Turn it around**  
Sit the children in a circle and give them a sequential activity to do, e.g. folding up a letter, putting it in an envelope, writing a name sticking down the envelope and delivering it. Allow each child to take a turn and say what they are doing.
- **Once upon a time**  
Give each child one picture from a sequence. Each child should describe their card and then one member of the group sorts everyone into the correct order so the story can be told. Let each child have a turn.
- **Animal magic**  
In a circle, everyone makes an animal noise but has to repeat what the others have done before making their own. Encourage the children to look at the right child as they make each noise.
- **Pass it on!**  
Pass an object around the circle. Each child has to make a comment about it, taking care not to copy what others have said (this also supports good listening!)
- **Rule bound**  
In circle time discuss the rules of conversational turn taking.  
For example: look at the person who is talking to you, don't speak when they are speaking, don't change the subject, use verbal fillers e.g. ah hah, umm, ok, to show you are interested and only interrupt when really necessary.
- **Feely bag**  
Equipment: Bag, range of objects that are not too obvious in shape (e.g. fir cone, brush, remote control etc).  
How to play: Children sit in a semi-circle in front of you. One object is placed into the bag without the children seeing it. The bag is passed round the circle, with each child having a feel. Encourage the children to think in their heads of what they think the object is but to remain quiet until everyone has had a feel in the bag. When the bag has gone round the circle, you say 'hands up anyone who thinks they know what was in the bag.' One child is then chosen to make a guess, and guessing continues until someone guesses correctly.

Find more information and advice on the NHS Speech and Language Therapy Service in Bedfordshire and Luton on the website or Facebook page: [www.childspeechbedfordshire.co.uk](http://www.childspeechbedfordshire.co.uk)



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- **Yes-No**

Equipment: Slips of paper or card, enough for all members of the group. Half have 'yes' written on them, half have 'no' written on them. A bag.

How to play: This game can be played during any activity such as making a floor puzzle, building a Jenga tower, making a collage etc. Turns are regulated by the yes/no bag. The bag is given to the first child who pulls out a slip. If it is a 'yes' that child takes a turn. If it is a 'no', the slip goes back in the bag, and the next child in the circle has a turn.

- **In my case**

How to play: This is a variant of a well-known game. Children sit in a semi-circle in front of you. Explain that they are going to make a list of things to go on holiday. You start by saying 'in my case there is a ..... book' The next child continues, 'in my case there is a book and a ...comb' Each child tries to remember and repeat the items that have been said previously, and adds another.

- **30 Seconds**

Equipment: A bag of familiar objects or toys as prompts, stop watch or watch with a second hand.

How to play: Children sit in a semi-circle in front of you. They take turns to select an object from the bag, and have to talk about it until you say 'stop'. You will need to time them. You may want to start with 15 or 20 seconds as 30 seconds can take longer than you think.

- **Rule based games**

Turn taking games with clearly explained rules can be used to reinforce learning in a wide variety of curriculum areas. This enables all children to get involved and take an equal and active part e.g. PE activities which encourage turn taking are good because they incorporate freedom of movement Organised activities at break time can bridge the gap between turn taking in the classroom and free play in the playground e.g. supervised skittles or skipping rope games.

- Structured turn-taking games you may already have:

Elefun/ Pop up pirate/ Hungry hippos

Snakes and ladders

Connect 4

Crocodile teeth

Guess who

Kerplunk

Monkey business

Marble run

Lotto / Snap / Matching games

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