

# Early social communication skills

## Developing turn-taking (Early Years Children)

### Activities and strategies to try:

Turn-taking through play is an important basis from which children learn to take turns at talking, i.e. have a conversation. It is an important social skill to learn. For the young child beginning to communicate a 'turn' can be a look, a gesture or a sound. The more turns they get to take the more opportunities they have to learn.

- **For all of these activities remember:**
  - ⇒ Use **motivating** toys or activities.
  - ⇒ **Be explicit** when saying who's turn it e.g. 'Johnny's turn, Teacher's turn'
  - ⇒ Use **specific praise** e.g. 'good waiting', 'good turn taking'
- Ideas of activities:
  - **Water and sand play** - taking turns to pour through a sieve / fill a bucket
  - **Life the flap books** - take turns to lift the flap and turn the page
  - **Skittles and ball** - take turns to knock them down
  - **Pop-up toys** or Jack in the box - take turns to press the button
  - **Building blocks** - take turns to add a block to build a tower
  - **Inset jigsaw or shape sorter** - take turns to put in pieces
  - **Cars and train** - take turns to push round tracks/roads/under bridges
  - **Rolling balls back and forth** to each other
  - Throw balls and bean bags to each other
  - **Point out good turn taking during daily activities** e.g. Waiting to wash hands



**Measuring progress:** The child will be able to sit with another person and take 3 turns of a game, increasing to 5 turns etc. The child will then be able to take turns with an adult and a peer before gradually increasing the number of children, allowing the adult to step back and monitor.