

MARCH & APRIL 2023

# TIMELY TOPICS

JORDAN CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER



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## PARENT CLASSES:

Available on YouTube:

- **Early Signs of Autism**
- **Teaching Your Child to Wait**
  
- **See back page for QR codes and links to videos**

## SHARING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

"Sharing is caring!" Our kids hear this phrase a lot. Their favorite TV character says it. They might hear it in a song at daycare. We might even be the one saying it to them.

Few things are more embarrassing as a parent than seeing your child take a toy away from another child! Maybe your child screams "MINE!" and pushes them down.

You've talked to them about sharing. You've told them it's important and they need to do it. Maybe they have even shared with you a lot. They'll happily shove their sticky fruit snacks into your mouth.

Sharing is an important skill that begins developing in early childhood. Sharing leads to more advanced social skills as well as problem solving, communication, forming friendships, developing empathy and compassion, and resilience.

So, why do they seem so selfish at times with their toys?

In this issue, we will cover when sharing develops, when kids should and should not share, as well as strategies to teach and encourage your child to share.

# 6 Stages of Play

The stage of play your child is currently at will give you insight into whether or not your child is ready to share. Typically, kids learn to share around 3-5 years of age when they are in the associative and cooperative stages of play. If your child is delayed with their language, social, and/or play skills, sharing may develop later. Knowing your child's current skills and play stage can help you adjust your expectations. Review these 6 stages to see which one best matches your child's current play.

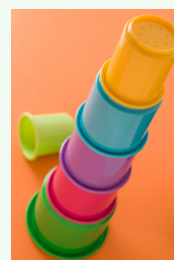
## Unoccupied Play

- Babies or small kids play by touching, moving, and putting toys in their mouth. Play isn't organized yet. They are exploring what's around them and starting to figure out how things work.
- Types of toys: balls, stuffed and soft toys, rattles, board books, cups, play gyms, activity tables



## Solitary Play

- During solitary play, kids will play with simple toys by themselves. They continue to explore a variety of toys and start learning problem solving and cause and effect.
- Pop up toys, ring stackers, musical toys, stacking cups, balls



## Onlooker Play

- Kids will watch each other and be aware that other kids are around, but won't necessarily play with other kids or near them yet.
- Board books, puzzles, cars, cause and effect toys, stackers, pop up toys



*\*Note on safety: Check all toys for small pieces and sharp edges. Get rid of broken toys or pieces. Supervise your child while they play to ensure safety.*

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## Parallel Play

- Kids are playing side by side and with the same toys, but are not yet playing together. This is what we see most of in toddler classes and even into preschool.
- Cars, trains, sensory tables, simple art activities, barns and castles



## Associative Play

- This type of play usually begins in the preschool years. Kids are wanting to play with each other, not just toys. There might not be a lot of interaction yet, but it's coming.
- Playground equipment, dress up, play houses



## Cooperative Play

- During cooperative play, kids are playing games together. There are roles and rules with this type of play. Kids are interacting with each other and using materials around them for their play. This happens during late preschool - kindergarten.
- Playing school, doctor, grocery store, house, etc.



## Why is Sharing So Difficult?

Sharing is a skill that develops over time. It's also a skill that we as caregivers need to not expect until our kids are developmentally ready. We wouldn't expect our 6 month old to walk or our toddler to read. Toddlers, two-year-olds, and preschoolers do not yet have the comprehension and skills needed to share.

### Selfishness before sharing

- During the second and third years of life, kids learn that they are separate people from their caregivers and begin to establish their own identity.
- Kids are also becoming very attached to people and objects during this phase. These people and items are very important to them and they don't want to share mommy's lap or their blanket.

### Can't see another's point of view

- When we can see something from another person's point of view, we have empathy for them. We feel bad they feel bad. We can imagine how sad it is for another person when they're going through a difficult situation. This begins to develop between age 3-6.
- Young kids don't want to share because they generally cannot imagine what it's like from the other child's perspective. They care about themselves and their things need to stay with them.
- Parents and other caregivers can teach some two-year-olds and preschoolers to share, however, a child is not yet truly understanding someone else's feelings yet. This makes it difficult to share on their own.

### No concept of time

- Giving up anything (toy, mommy, etc.) means giving it up for good to a young child.
- Structured turn taking ("Ella has the toy for one minute, then it's your turn") is still difficult to understand.

### Lack of impulse control

- If young kids see something they want, they take it! They want what they want when they want it!
- Even if your child can use signs or words in other situations, they get caught up in the moment and won't remember to "use their words."



# Encouraging Sharing

While we definitely don't expect our toddlers, two-year-olds, and preschoolers to be masters at sharing, we can help them develop this skill with practice, encouragement, and appropriate expectations for their age and ability.

## Model sharing.

- If someone asks to borrow something of yours, talk about it. "Mommy is sharing her book with a friend."
- Share with your children. For instance, you could say "I have some popcorn. Do you want some?" If you're on the couch, you can say, "I'll move over so there's room for you."

## Give your child items to share.

- Let your child hand out napkins at dinner or give them a container of crackers and have them hand one to each person in the room.
- Collect items (leaves, rocks, etc.) on a walk and then hand them out to family members when you get back.



## Don't force sharing.

- Allow your child to have certain things that are just theirs and don't need to be shared. We adults wouldn't share everything we have just because someone asked. Allow your child to have special toys/items that are just theirs.
- Teach your child there are toys that are special and not for sharing, but there are also toys that everyone can have. For instance, the toys in your child's room or special blankets are just theirs, but the toys and books in the living room are for everyone.

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## Practice with adults first.

- Practice turn taking games (rolling or throwing a ball) with an adult first. This will be much easier for your child to do before expecting them to take turns with siblings or same age kids.
- Make a yummy drink or snack and then take turns getting a bite or sip. Use words like "your turn" and "my turn."

## Use a timer.

- A timer can be helpful with teaching taking turns and sharing. Explain it ahead of time. "Marcus gets the toy first. When the timer beeps, it's Max's turn."
- Have something to do for the child that is waiting. Don't let the waiting child hover over the child with the toy.

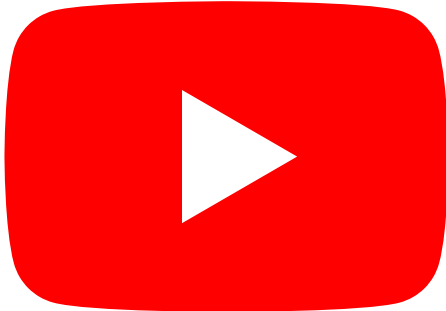
## Plan ahead.

- If you know certain toys are very difficult for your child to share with other kids, put them away if another kid is coming over.
- If your child worries about the baby getting their toys, show them where they can play without the baby bothering them.

## Keep your expectations realistic.

- Remember -- toddlers, two-year olds, and many preschoolers do not share. This is a later developing skill. If you have a preschooler, you will probably still see them take toys or not want to give up their toy.
- Start introducing the idea of "sharing" by modeling it yourself, practicing turn taking games, and by having your child "share" a snack or pass out napkins at snack.
- When you are practicing sharing, be there to help your children. Help them take turns with a toy and then help the one without a toy find something else to do while they wait.
- Empathize with their frustration. You can say, "It is really hard to not have that. I know you want that toy so much." Even if they don't understand your words, they understand your tone and your comfort.





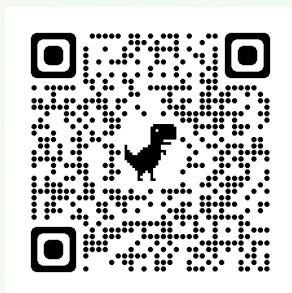
# Parent Classes are now on YouTube!

## ANNOUNCEMENT!

You can now find the monthly classes on YouTube. Watch them when it's convenient for you as well as catch up on topics you may have missed!

Scan the QR code or paste the link into your browser:

[Early Signs of Autism in Toddlers, Two-Year Olds, and Preschoolers](#)



<https://youtu.be/8fUyyGjGNFc>

[Teaching Your Child To Wait](#)



<https://youtu.be/46-gLIbpkAg?t=1>

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