

Tips for Parents of Young Children



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Parenting.
Give it time.
gov.wales/giveittime

Supporting a child to learn how to share

Sharing is a skill which every child has to learn. They will understand the concept of sharing at around age 3-4 but that doesn't mean they will always do it! They may still put their own needs first and have impulses that can often take over. You can help them to develop the skills they will need to share and make friends as they grow using the following tips.



Things that you can do to help them:

- **Be a great role model** – When you are with other adults, practice sharing e.g. 'would you like a biscuit?' or 'would you like the milk first and then I can have it after you'. This is a very simple but effective way to model a behaviour your child can copy.
- **Praise** – Make sure you praise them when they are sharing e.g. 'I am so proud of you for sharing your blocks and playing together'. Children respond well to praise and will be more likely to repeat the good behaviour.
- **Be patient** – Remember that most children won't fully understand how to share consistently until they are 5 or 6 and even then they may still need a bit of a reminder here and there.
- **Don't step in straight away** – If you do notice a conflict, try to let your child work it out for themselves first. They may choose to move on and play with another toy. They need time and patience to learn how to problem-solve.
- **Help them to communicate** – More often than not a tantrum can develop because they don't understand their emotions yet and don't have the words to explain how they feel. Help them put their feelings into words, for example, 'It sounds like you feel cross', or 'you're looking a bit disappointed'. This also reassures them you understand how they might be feeling.

Things that you can do together to practice:

Here are some things that you can do together, while you are spending time together and playing, to teach them about their emotions and feelings and prepare them for friendships.

- **Role playing to help with sharing** – Sharing can be difficult for children as it's something they have to learn and can take a lot of practice. It can often cause conflict when children play and can lead to arguments and fallings out. You can help them at home by role playing with toys showing them how to share and play with other toys e.g. 'do you think teddy is upset that dolly took the toy from him?' or 'could dolly ask teddy if she can play with the toy next?'
- **Playing games to practice taking turns** – Play games like snap or board games which require people to take turns. This is a quick and easy way to help your child to understand that to have fun and play the game; they need to wait their turn.
- **Playdate preparation** – It's a good idea to do some preparation. Hide away their favourite toy or blanket in a safe place. Then ask your child to put out the toys that they think their friend would play with e.g. 'do you think Jack would like to play with your puzzle' and explain that the toys that are out are for everyone to enjoy.
- **Attending groups** – Taking your child to social groups/activities such as parent and toddler groups or the park can help your child learn to share with other children in a real situation. It also helps them deal with conflict and witness other children sharing.

Where to get additional help and support

School/childcare setting key worker or LSA – (contact school/setting)

Local Health Visitor – www.wales.nhs.uk

Advice on managing tantrums – giveittime.gov.wales/tricky-moments-and-common-behaviours/tantrums?lang=en

Advice on if your child is biting – giveittime.gov.wales/tricky-moments-and-common-behaviours/biting?lang=en

Families First Advice line – gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/parenting-support-guidance/help/families-first/contact-local-families-first-team/?lang=en

Dewis site for information on wellbeing – www.dewis.wales

Family Information Service – gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/parenting-support-guidance/help/familyinformationservices/?lang=en

For helpful tips on managing challenging behaviour such as tantrums and for a range positive parenting techniques, visit: www.gov.wales/giveittime