



## Every Child a Talker: Every adult involved

### **Playing 'SWAPSIES': encouraging young children to share**

Learning to share is an important part of social development.

But it's not easy. A young child might think, "Why should I share something that I like? I am enjoying what I've got? If I share it, when will I get it back?"

This can cause worry, and lead to 'challenging' reactions. Equally a child might try and snatch a toy from another child. When the child refuses to part with it, the 'snatcher' might say to an adult, "She's not sharing!!"

It's a difficult business. However, being able to share something is a very advanced social skill, and there are several stages that children can go through before they reach an understanding for the need to share, and how to negotiate a 'deal'. Learning about 'swapping' is an important early stage.

#### **Try playing 'Swapsies' with a group of children, to help them understand about sharing.**

Have a bag of cuddly toys (Each one should be different). Hand them out among the group so that everyone has a toy, including all the adults.

Ask the children to say what they have (or tell them if they don't know what it is called).

Ask if everyone is happy with what they have got. This is unlikely, so say, "I don't want my giraffe/owl, monkey etc. Would anyone like to swap with me?"

Someone will almost certainly want what you have got, so swap with them. Then say, "I don't want my dolphin that Zak has just given me. Who would like to swap my dolphin for what they have got?"

This can go on for some time. Remember that this activity works best if the adult leading the activity leads the swapping.

If you repeat this activity every day; e.g. at group/circle time, you can gradually ask the children to become the 'leader' and eventually they will be able to swap amongst themselves.

This activity also encourages vocabulary development, as the children are having fun naming objects.

Extend the activity to include fruit, vegetables, or anything from a story or theme that you are working on

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