



# Every Child a Talker

**‘Hide and socks’: a fun game to teach sharing and swapping, and generate lots of chat!**

How many times have you heard children being told, “You’ve got to learn to share?” Sharing is not an easy thing for anyone to do, and especially when you are young and someone else wants your favourite toy. Children are also fascinated by socks, and here’s an activity that promotes language, sharing and maths too! This activity is suitable for children as young as 15 months.

## **What you need**

- A bag, box or wicker hamper containing lots of pairs of socks of different sizes and colours and patterns (mine are from Primark)
- A collection of small soft toys (I use TV and film characters such as Bob the Builder, In the Night Garden, Thomas the Tank Engine etc)
- Music (I have an iPod with docking station and TV theme tunes downloaded from iTunes)
- Plenty of adults to support the children
- Some colourful rugs for us to sit on

## **What we do**

We all take our shoes off and sit on the rugs (taking shoes off immediately calms children down!). Talk about who is wearing socks, what their socks look like.

Tell everyone that you are going to give each child a toy, and if they are not happy with what they have been given then they can swap their toy with someone else.

Show them how to swap, and model what language to use: “I don’t want Bob the Builder anymore, can I swap it for your Thomas the Tank Engine, please?”

This usually leads to lots of swapping and chat.

Some children will not want to part with the toy they have got. This is fine, and an important point to share with the group; “If you like what you have got, then you don’t need to swap, but say, “No thank you, I want to play with my toy.”

This activity can take quite a long time, especially if all the adults get involved and support the children. It also generates a lot of chat!

Now it is time for the socks. Pass round socks, making sure that every child and adult has one. Again, encourage swapping, which once more encourages lots of chat. When everyone has a sock that they are happy with, tell the children to hide their toy inside their sock. (This generates even more chat: ‘Mine won’t fit/I need a bigger sock’ etc.

When everyone has a sock stuffed with a toy, ask the children to pass their socks to one of the adults. Then you are ready to play ‘Pass the Socks’, which is exactly the same as ‘Pass the Parcel’, but with socks.

Be warned! This session can go on for a long time, and allow at least 30 minutes: and particularly if you are using TV and film-related toys, as children love to talk about these.

**Michael Jones**

Early language consultant [www.talk4meaning.co.uk](http://www.talk4meaning.co.uk)