

That's Mine!

That's my horse!



Encourage your child to protect her rights and express her needs with words.

With your help, your child can learn to use words rather than physical acts to satisfy her needs and rights.



Why this is important

Your child needs to learn to protect her rights and feelings with words rather than actions. Although she may occasionally use physical aggression because of her limited vocabulary, she eventually will stand up for herself instead of hitting. Your child can learn to express herself in appropriately assertive ways by simply and clearly saying what she needs or wants.

What you do

- Help your child practice using words instead of actions to express her needs. For example:

A personal choice

I want a ... (banana).

An ordinary need

I need my... (potty).

An alternative to physical aggression

That's my... (doll).

A self-protective statement

I don't like... (to be hit).

- Observe your child carefully so that you can recognize the need for these expressive statements and specifically encourage her to use them: *Thank you for telling me that was your car. I'm sorry she took it away from you.* Or, *You used words to tell her you don't like to be hit. Now she knows how you feel.*

Another idea

Help your child anticipate the need for using clear statements by role-playing with her. You can create scenarios involving various emotions or physical needs.

Let's read together!

Hands Are Not for Hitting
by Martine Agassi, Ph.D.

I Look Great

You dressed yourself.

You look great!



Place a full-length mirror where your child can use it.

You can help your child know how he looks and feel good about his reflection in the mirror.



Why this is important

A full-length mirror helps your child know what his body looks like as a whole. He can begin to take more responsibility for grooming himself by using the mirror when combing his hair or getting dressed. He may enjoy simply staring at his reflection and smiling at the image. Studying the mirror reinforces his self-image as he learns to notice the color of his eyes and what his face looks like. A positive self-image builds confidence as he grows.

What you do

- Provide a full-length mirror for your child to use daily.
- Help him get dressed and encourage his efforts. *You put your shirt on by yourself. You look great! Do you want to look at yourself in the mirror?*
- Suggest dressing in front of the mirror on occasion so that he can see how his shirt looks as he buttons it or how his pants look as he pulls them on.
- Invite him to comb his hair in front of the mirror. Show him that you think he is capable by not fixing his hair after he combs it.
- Offer him privacy as he becomes comfortable dressing and grooming in front of the mirror.

Another idea

Your child might occasionally enjoy sharing the mirror with another child. The children can see their full images side by side and notice the similarities and differences.

Let's read together!

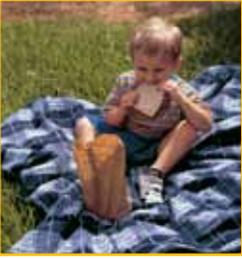
When I Feel Good About Myself
by Cornelia Maude Spelman

Packing My Own Picnic

You're spreading it well.

Invite your child to pack a special picnic lunch and decide what to include.

Packing a picnic allows your child to act independently and learn from his choices.



Why this is important

Your child probably likes to complete tasks on his own. In this activity he can work independently and his mistakes will have minimal consequences. An important thing for him to learn about independence is that sometimes things do not go as planned. Handling the problems of a poorly packed lunch is a gentle introduction to the risks of problems with later responsibilities, such as getting school supplies together in a backpack.

What you do

- Invite your child to join you on a picnic. Suggest that he first pack a lunch to take with him.
- Go with him to the kitchen and point out available items for packing.
- Talk about where he will be eating, such as in the backyard or at the park, and what foods might be convenient to eat there.
- Lay out the food items as you talk, along with several sandwich bags for him to use. Help him remember where to find his lunchbox or a paper bag.
- Stay in the kitchen while he works, but help only if asked. *I'll be here in the kitchen for a few minutes. Let me know if you need some help.*
- Remember that this is an exercise in independence but you can control his diet by limiting his food choices to healthy items only.

Another idea

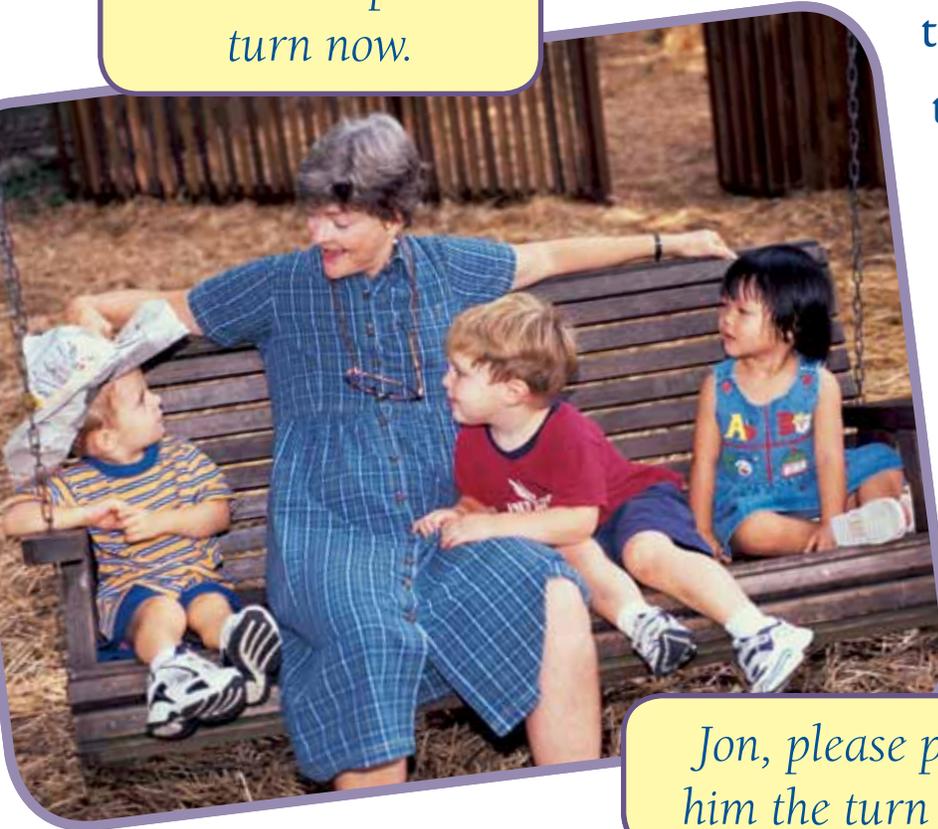
When you repeat this game, it might help your child if you remind him of the outcome of the previous picnic: *Last time the pudding leaked out, remember?* He still may make a few poor choices, but you can remind him of what he learned from his prior experiences.

Let's read together!

Hungry Harry
by Joanne Partis

Wear the Turn Hat

*It's Christopher's
turn now.*



*Jon, please pass
him the turn hat.*

Invite your child and one or two friends to play a follow-the-leader game in which each person takes a turn wearing the hat and leading.

Using a hat to represent the current leader in the game can help your child learn to take turns.



Why this is important

Using a physical symbol, such as a hat, may help your child understand the idea of taking turns in a game. Your child may enjoy the importance of wearing the hat as he learns about cooperation. Using friendly language such as *passing the turn hat* instead of *giving up your turn* helps your child understand that his turn will come again soon.

What you do

- Find a special hat for the game.
- Invite your child and two friends to play: *Let's play Follow the Leader. This hat will tell us whose turn it is to be the leader.*
- Choose one child and say: *Jon, will you be the leader? You can put on the hat so we'll all know it's your turn.*
- Encourage the leader to perform an action, such as touching his nose. The other children will then copy his movements. Give each child a few minutes at a time with the hat.

Another idea

You can play this game one-on-one with your child at home to help him share leadership. In a group, you can use the hat to mark each child's turn to pass out spoons, pull the wagon, or lead a song.

Let's read together!

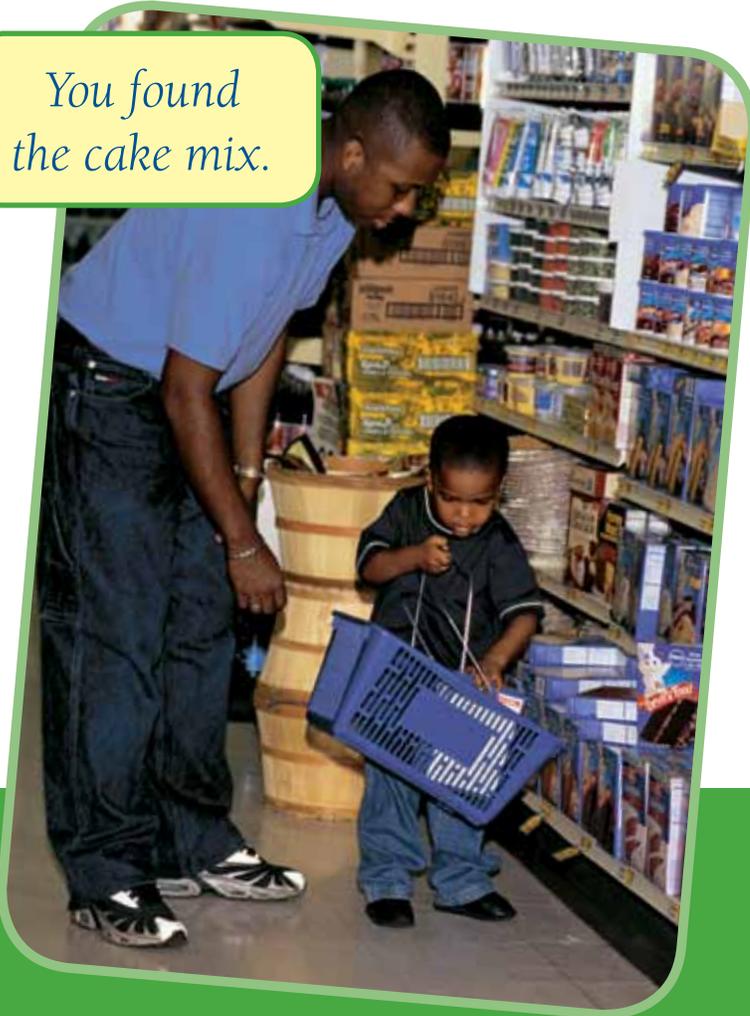
Share and Take Turns
by Cheri J. Meiners

Plan an Event



Here is our shopping list.

You found the cake mix.



Plan for a special event with your child by creating a shopping list, gathering all items needed, and reviewing the steps in the process.

Your child can learn to plan and feel included in the family.



Why this is important

Your child will find shopping with a purpose and a list more satisfying than simply accompanying an adult to the store. He can begin to understand the process of planning as he participates in a special event as an equal member. As your child's activities become more complex, he will need to think about materials needed and steps to be taken. Planning an event with you gives him practice in thinking ahead and following through.

What you do

- Include your child in planning for a special event, such as baking a cake for a relative's birthday: *Next week is Granddaddy's birthday. Do you think he might like a birthday cake?*
- Talk with your child about what is needed for the event, and make a list together. *Cake mix, icing, candles, etc.*
- Invite your child to participate in making a picture list of the needed items using magazines, scissors, paper, and glue. Help him find pictures of the needed items, cut them out, and glue them to the list.
- Take your child to the supermarket and offer minimal guidance as he chooses an item to find on the list.
- Review the shopping process at home with your child: *We were smart to plan. We have everything for Granddaddy's cake.*

Another idea

Simple planning can also be done for making a jack-o-lantern, setting up a child's birthday party, or preparing for a special cultural celebration.

Let's read together!

Bunny Party
by Rosemary Wells

Who, What, Where?

*Who has on
blue shoes?*



*Gary's shoes
are blue!*

Throughout your day, ask your child *who*, *what*, and *where* questions that will encourage him to describe people, objects, and places.

You encourage conversation with your child by posing questions that your child can answer.



Why this is important

Answering basic questions gives your child the chance to use many of the words he knows and encourages him to learn new words. By following your child's answer with more conversation about the topic, you help him describe people, objects, and places. Questions beginning with *who*, *what*, and *where* will guide him throughout his life in telling and interpreting stories.

What you do

- Include simple questions in your daily conversations with your child using the words *who*, *what* and *where*. *Who is coming to visit? What sound do you hear? Where's a good place to hide?*
- Use your child's answers as a starting point for further back-and-forth conversation on the same topic.
- Keep your questions short and casual. Your child may be reluctant to participate if you appear too insistent with your questions.

Another idea

Use questions to encourage your child's creative thinking. Create an imaginary scenario and encourage your child to respond to your questions about it. *If we were going to have a big party for all of the animals at the zoo, whom would you invite? What would we do at the party?*

Let's read together!

Who Likes Rain?
by Wong Herbert Yee

That Doesn't Belong

*What doesn't belong
on the table?*

When setting the table, add an item that should not be there, such as a toothbrush, and wait for your child to discover it.

Your child will develop a clearer understanding of a group by noticing an object that does not belong in the group.

The toothbrush!





Why this is important

Pointing out an object that does not belong helps your child express the reasons why something belongs or does not belong. Noticing the item that is not part of the group helps her clarify her understanding of group membership.

What you do

- Finish setting the table by placing an odd object, such as a toothbrush or a book, near a plate.
- Say to your child: *Something doesn't look right. Would you please come and help me see what doesn't belong?*
- Show her the setting and tell her: *I was setting the table with things we use to eat. But something is there that shouldn't be. Can you see what it is?*
- Draw her attention to it, if necessary, by commenting on the appropriate items on the table: *I know we need a spoon, a cup, and a napkin.*
- Give positive feedback when she correctly locates the object. *You're right! That toothbrush shouldn't be there.*

Another idea

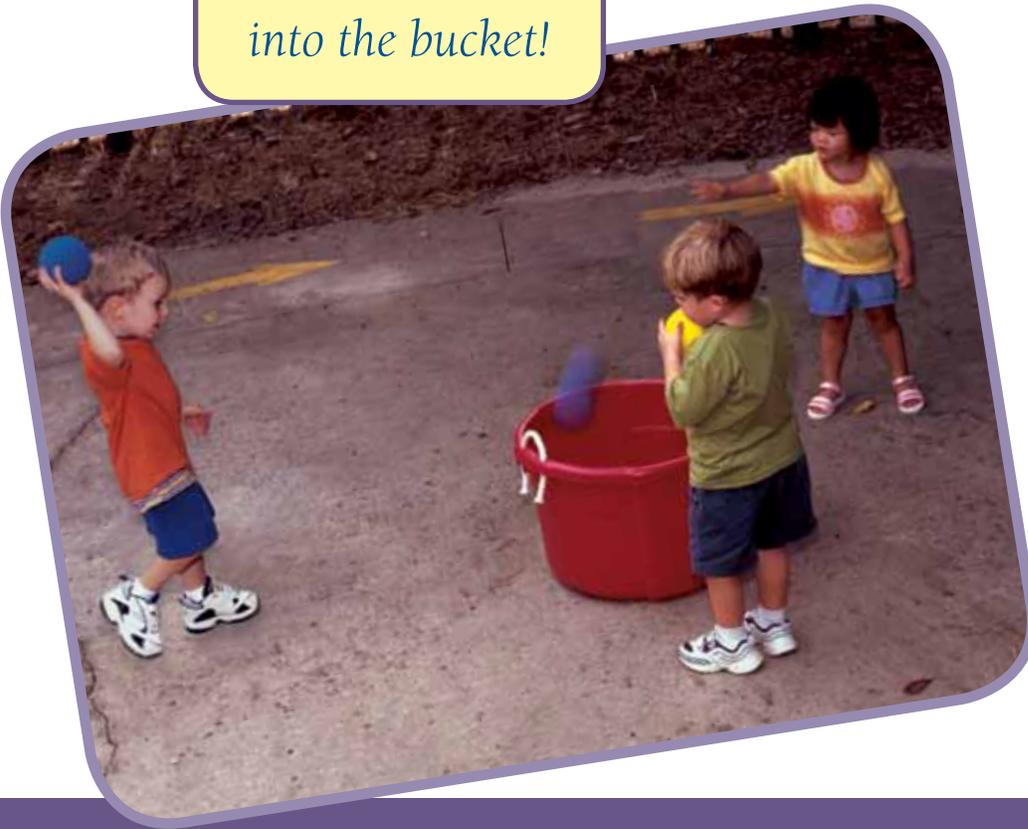
Increase the number of odd objects to be found. Think of other ways to incorporate the game into your time together: a pencil stuck into a crayon box, a sock in the washcloth drawer, etc.

Let's read together!

There's A Cow in the Cabbage Patch
by Clare Beaton

Ball in the Bucket

*Wow! You
threw the ball
into the bucket!*



With your child, practice throwing a ball into a bucket. Increase the throwing distance as his skills improve.

Gradually, your child will gain more control in throwing.



Why this is important

By this age, children are well aware that throwing is usually done with a purpose, as in basketball or other sports. Throwing a ball at a large target helps your child learn to control and direct his own body movements. He must control his body in order to perform this or other specific actions.

What you do

- Provide a container such as a box, basket, tub, or bucket, a ball for your child, and a ball for yourself.
- Invite your child to stand with you a few feet away from the bucket.
- Throw your ball into the bucket as your child does the same. *Watch me throw the ball. Can you do it, too?*
- Move the bucket closer to him if he misses, and encourage him to try again.
- Describe his accuracy when appropriate: *You're getting it right where you want it!*
- Change the game by adding water to the bucket.

Ready to move on?

You can increase the difficulty by moving the bucket farther away or finding a container with a smaller opening.

Let's read together!

The Story of Red Rubber Ball
by Constance Kling Levy

An Errand for Two

Jack, you may take the note.



Invite your child and a friend or sibling to share an errand in which both children have a specific duty to perform.

Your child may enjoy taking a responsible part in a cooperative activity.

Les, you bring the books back in your basket.



Why this is important

Sharing an errand teaches your child that cooperation means doing his expected part in an activity. Taking pleasure in needed activities done cooperatively is an important part of being a member of a group.

What you do

- Invite your child and a friend or sibling to go on an errand together. Whether inside or outside, keep safety in mind as you send them. The children do not need to be out of your sight for this game. Explain that you need them to do something to help you.
- Give each child a specific responsibility. Make sure they understand their roles before sending them out. For example, one child might take a note to a next-door neighbor asking for some flour. The other might carry back the flour.
- Review the result when they return: *You two did a great job together. Jack, it was important for you to get the note there. And Leslie, you did a good job carrying. Thanks for coming back so quickly.*

Another idea

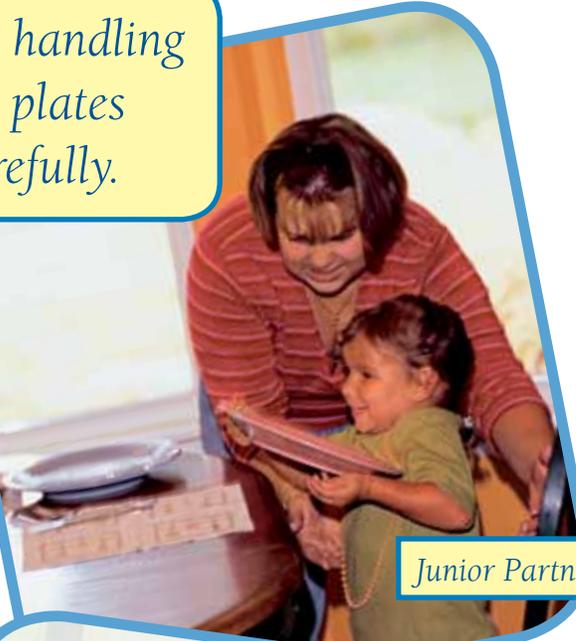
Your child and his friend can go to the kitchen to bring back snacks or to an adjoining room for art supplies.

Let's read together!

Miki's First Errand
by Yoriko Tsutsui

Changing Partner Roles

You're handling the plates carefully.



Junior Partner

Partner with your child in an activity that allows her to move gradually from less to more responsibility.

Experimenting with partner roles helps your child learn to lead as well as follow.



Senior Partner

Where do you want me to put these?



Why this is important

Your child is old enough to experience responsibility in various helper, partner, and leadership roles. Different situations require differing balances of cooperation and leadership. Children need experience in these three roles if they are to function well in group situations.

What you do

- Use the simple task of setting the table to guide your child through various leadership roles.
- Invite your child to help you set the table. In this junior partner role she helps you as you lead the task. *Can you please place the forks and plates on the table?*
- Move to equal partnership for this task when she feels comfortable with helping you set the table. Together, decide who will put what on the table: *I'll be responsible for the serving dishes. What do you plan to put on the table?*
- Watch for signs that your child is ready to take full responsibility for setting the table. Assign her the leadership or senior partner role so that she knows she will place most of the items on the table and give you directions on where to place the rest.

Another idea

You can plan other activities that will allow your child to move through these three roles. For example, you could make paper mosaics. At first you direct the cutting and placement of the paper pieces. With the next mosaic, you could both share the responsibility. Finally, she could make all decisions about a third mosaic and give you directions.

Let's read together!

Jamaica Tag-Along
by Juanita Havill