

Practising turn-taking and talking: 0-3 years

Rationale:

Turn-taking and talking games will help your child learn to share and play cooperatively. You can start to play simple turn-taking and talking games when your child is a baby. Even if he cannot understand about taking turns, he learns a lot by watching you, listening to your voice and anticipating your actions. It is also fun for your baby or toddler, and a good way to build his attachment to you.

Age range information

0-3 years

What you need

These simple games do not require any special equipment.

How to do it

To play turn-taking and talking games, you just need to look into your baby's or toddler's eyes and talk, sing or play an action rhyme like 'Pat-a-cake'. If you give your child time to respond, he might smile, giggle, copy you or say the next part of a rhyme. If you encourage his response with praise, smiles and eye contact, he will want to keep playing. You can keep playing for as long as it is enjoyable for you both.

Here are some ideas for turn-taking and talking games:

- Have a 'conversation' with your baby. Even before your baby can make sounds, you can still 'talk' to him by asking him a question, waiting a little while as though he had responded, then talking again. For example, 'You're lovely and clean now. Did you enjoy your bath? You did? That's great!' Once your baby begins to make sounds, copy your baby's sounds, taking turns as though you were talking to each other.
- Play 'Peekaboo' with your baby. Hide your face behind your hands for a few seconds, then take your hands away and say 'boo!' with a happy smile on your face. It is fun for your baby, and he is learning to anticipate what happens next. You will know if he wants you to keep going because he will smile, laugh or reach out his arms to you. He may want to copy you, and you can take turns at hiding.
- Play 'Pat-a-cake' or another rhyming and action song. Gently pat your baby's hands or legs as you say the rhyme. Encourage your older baby or toddler to clap and pat himself. If your child knows the rhyme, you can take turns saying each line. You can also leave off the last word of each line for him to fill in. If you do not know this rhyme, here are the words:

*Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake baker's man.
Bake me a cake as fast as you can.
Prick it and pat it and mark it with 'b'.
Put it in the oven for baby and me.*



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

For some suggestions on rhymes, click here to download a booklet on rhymes!

Recommended Reads

- [ABC Baby Signs](#)
- [Baby Babble: A Book of Baby's First Words](#)
- [Beyond Baby Talk](#)

Engage your child with simple activities at home! Check out some of these things you can do together:

- [Snakes and Ladders](#)