

# Taking Turns

Taking turns is a skill that we learn as young children. Initially, people start out learning to take turns when playing games or participating in sit-down activities. As we get older, we learn to take turns during reciprocal conversation and when we participate in rule-based games and sports.



Taking turns continues to be an important skill even into our adolescence and adult years. People learn to take turns as they participate in structured group activities at school and work and even when they learn to drive a car and wait for the “right of way”.

It is important to teach students to “watch, wait and listen” so that they can anticipate when it is their turn to play or speak or participate when turn taking is required.

When children are young, it can be helpful to structure turn-taking. Below are some instructions on how to set up a structured turn-taking activity to encourage the skill and reduce the difficulties that come with not knowing how to wait or anticipate taking turns.

## Developing an Assembly Turn-Taking Game

- 1 Select an independent, building activity that your child enjoys and that could be turned into a pairs activity.
- 2 Organize the materials of the activity so that turn-taking has to be built in.
- 3 Determine how many turns each player will have to complete the assembly activity.
- 4 Make sure to have the appropriate number of name tags for each person on the turn-taking board.
- 5 Set up all materials in an orderly format.
- 6 Pick a time when you can practice the activity with your child or student.
- 7 Once you have practiced the same activity three times – not consecutively, replace your turn with someone else (preferably another parent, staff person, sibling or student).