



Problem: Teaching young children how to share

TIP – Sharing is a complex concept, beyond most children under three years old, and challenging to many kids long after three. Most “sharing” that I have observed at the preschool aged level amounts to managed manipulation. Try approaching it this way; when little Billy wants the toy that Shawn is playing with and squeals, “Shawn won’t share.”, resist responding with “Shawn share with Billy. You have a great teaching moment before you now. If you take the time to get down on their level and explain to them both that Shawn has the toy and can play with it as looooooooooong as he likes, but when he is done, Billy would *really like to play* with it, would he please give it to Billy then? If Billy needs some help finding another toy to play with, then help him with that. I have always been pleasantly surprised that Shawn doesn’t play with the toy that much longer and will usually remember to pass it on to Billy. Young children can better grasp the idea of taking turns.

Result: By protecting Shawn’s turn with the toy you create a sense of security for Shawn. When things are constantly taken away, by force, manipulation, or whining we all have a tendency to hoard, just the opposite of sharing. By ‘forcing’ children to share we actually teach them to hoard, or manipulate. We really want to teach them to share on their own and from the heart. Try it, it has always worked for me. I’d love to get your feedback on how it works for you.

Parent coaching will help you implement ideas such as this.
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