

Pre-verbal Communication – Turn Talking

Information for patients, relatives and
carers

December 2023

What is turn taking?

Turn taking is a skill that we use on a daily basis. It is the ability to take turns with other people during communication, interaction and/or play.

Why is turn taking important?

Communication and interaction are described as 'two way', because they need people to take turns to work. Turn taking can be done through words, gestures, facial expressions and body language. It is important that we learn to take turns in order to have successful and fun interactions with other people.

However, some children may find taking turns difficult and might not be able to interact appropriately with others.

How do I do turn taking?

Below are some advice and general strategies that can help develop the skill:

- Try to remove any distractions from the room e.g. iPad, other toys, mobile phone or television by switching them off or moving them out of sight
- Give your child a choice of what they want to play with and incorporate pauses and turn taking into the game
- If your child is reluctant to choose a toy/game, sit opposite them and copy their actions and sounds. Slowly start to incorporate pauses and turn taking and encourage your child to wait for your turn.
- If you are just starting out with turn taking it is better to use people's names e.g. "Mummy's turn" or "Tommy's turn" ("my turn" and "your turn" comes later).
- If your child is enjoying themselves then they are more likely to take part!

Activities to try at home:



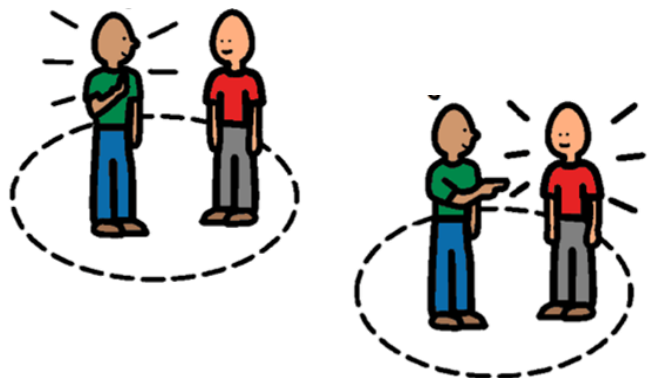
1. Jigsaw Puzzles



2. Building Towers



3. Ball Games



Jigsaw Puzzles

- Choose a jigsaw that is appropriate and motivating for your child
 - Offer your child a choice of two jigsaw puzzles – this makes it more fun for them!
 - Give them one piece of the puzzle and label it as your child's turn e.g. "Tommy's turn"
 - You then select a piece of the puzzle and say it is your turn e.g. "Mummy's turn"
 - Be sure to not let your child grab the piece of the puzzle out of your hand when it is your turn
- Keep taking turns and labelling them until the jigsaw is finished



Building Tower

- Give your child a tower block and label it as your child's turn e.g. "Tommy's turn"
 - You then add a block to the tower and say it's your turn e.g. "Mummy's turn"
 - Keep taking turns adding blocks and labelling the turns until the tower is finished
- Have fun knocking the tower down! – you can even try to increase the number of turns you take and see if your child will wait



Ball Games

- For this activity you can roll a ball or throw a ball
- You start with the ball and as you pass it to your child tell them whose turn it is e.g. "Mummy's turn"
- Hold your arms out to encourage your child to roll or throw the ball back to you
- As your child passes it back label it as their turn e.g. "Tommy's turn"
- Gradually increase the length of time your child must wait for their turn
- Have fun passing the ball!



How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have.

If you have any suggestions or comments about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (PALS) on 0191 445 6129 (10.00 – 16.00, Monday to Friday).

You can also email PALS at ghnt.pals.service@nhs.net

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:

Mrs Trudie Davies,
Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust,
Trust Headquarters,
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Sheriff Hill,
Gateshead,
NE9 6SX

The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Data Protection

Any personal information is kept confidential. There may be occasions where your information needs to be shared with other care professionals to ensure you receive the best care possible.

In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews and Statistics.

Further information is available via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website ([Privacy - QE Gateshead](#)) or by contacting the Data Protection Officer by telephone on 0191 445 8418 or by email ghnt.ig.team@nhs.net.

This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats upon request