

Can play with other children

When practitioners model positive social interactions and provide sensitive support, children develop the skills needed to make friends, work cooperatively and resolve conflicts.

Learning to play alongside and with other children helps develop communication skills, confidence, empathy and a sense of belonging within the setting.

Practitioners can support children by:

- Being consistent in your approach to supporting sharing, turn-taking and cooperation. Ensure all adults follow through on agreed expectations.
- Involving children in making decisions about activities, resources and their learning environment.
- Providing activities and resources that reflect children's interests and encourage shared play.
- Noticing children who find it difficult to join in with others and offer gentle support to help them access play opportunities.
- Joining in with children's play and helping connect children with similar interests.
- Offering games and activities with clear expectations and simple rules that children can understand and follow.
- Creating small group activities that encourage cooperation and teamwork.
- Celebrating positive interactions, kindness and friendship.

Activities, ideas, resources or strategies:

- **Model positive social language**
 - "Can I play with you?"
 - "Would you like to join us?"
 - "Can I have a turn when you've finished?"
 - "Let's do it together"
- **Turn-Taking Support**
 - Use sand timers to support turn-taking
 - Use visual supports to help children understand waiting and sharing
 - Use photographs of children on a waiting board or timeline
 - Encourage children to move their own photograph as turns change
 - Support children to become increasingly independent in managing turns
- **Adult-Facilitated Play**
 - Join children's play sensitively
 - Introduce children with shared interests to one another
 - Build together
 - Complete puzzles cooperatively
 - Create artwork as a group
 - Narrate positive interactions:
 - "You both like building towers"
 - "I noticed you worked together to solve that problem"
- **Friendship Opportunities**
 - Vary groupings throughout the day
 - Mix up group times to encourage children to interact with a wider range of peers
 - Balance adult-organised groups with opportunities for children to choose who they play with