

# Fostering Play Between Siblings

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*A sibling relationship is one of the first relationships your child will develop across the life-span. Sibling relationships are unique with differing effects on a child's development and perception of the world. Siblings function as social partners and an opportunity to develop experience with reciprocal interaction, communication, and conflict resolution skills (McHale, Updegraff & Feinberg, 2017).*

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## Tools for Success:

1. Encourage communication between siblings; have your child prompt their sibling to play: “come play with me”, “your turn”, sign “play”, or point to the activity
2. Incorporate different types of activities to hold their interest, and understand when it is time to take a break (short activities, under 5 minute are a good starting point)
3. Provide each sibling with the chance to choose an activity
4. Encourage parallel (side by side) play as much as possible to build tolerance of another child in their play area
5. Make sure the activity matches the skill level of each participating child (a task that is too easy or too difficult will not be successful)
6. Modify materials/set up when required if there is a large gap in abilities or ages (Example: smaller/larger blocks, different options for arts & crafts materials, implementation of movement breaks, etc).
7. Celebrate all wins; encourage siblings to provide praise to each other (Example: high fives, or “Good Job”)
8. Incorporate your child's interests in the activities you choose, follow their lead as much as possible
9. Choose activities where they work together to achieve a common goal (example: building one block tower vs. building independent towers side by side)
10. If helpful, provide a schedule or timer for each set of planned activities



*Finding ways for siblings to connect and engage with each other is crucial to the development of an enjoyable play experience and ongoing relationship. This resource will provide activity ideas and tips for facilitating sibling play and the development of this relationship.*

*Feel free to contact your Recreation Therapist if you have any questions or require any support while completing these or other cooperative activities.*

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## Practice Activities

### ***Turn Taking Activities***

#### Step One:

Games requiring a tool e.g. Critter Clinic or anything with a set of keys, Don't Break the Ice, Cariboo, pin the tail on the donkey, pinada, T-Ball, bowling (one ball), Operation

#### Step Two:

Slot Games or games with multiple pieces. E.g. Kerplunk, Piggy Bank, Pop The Pig, Jenga, crocodile dentist, Sneaky Snacky Squirrel

#### Step Three:

Games with rules or competition e.g., Connect 4, Guess Who, snakes and ladders, Monopoly, battleship, I Spy, Trouble

### ***Pretend/Imaginative Play Activities***

#### Step One:

Toys or Action Figures e.g. Potato Head, cars and tracks, farm animals, sea creatures, Paw Patrol, Barbies/LOL Dolls, superheros

#### Step Two:

Role Playing e.g. build a fort and play house, doctor/patient, vet clinic, construction site, play-dough restaurant, tea party

#### Step Three:

Games with rules or competition e.g. charades, Pictionary, sculpture, Cranium, Cadoo

### ***Manipulatives***

#### Step One:

Parallel Play – have both children completing their own activities with their own pot, e.g. beading, play-dough, Mag-formers

#### Step Two:

Associative Play – have each child complete their own activity, but pull from the same pot, for example build LEGO but have all the LEGO in one bucket

#### Step Three:

Coopeartive Play – complete an activity together e.g. build one tower together, work on a puzzle together, use a gears board

### ***Active Games***

#### Step One:

Structured games with both children playing actively e.g. obstacle course, dance videos, freeze dance, yoga, scavenger hunt

#### Step Two:

Leader games e.g. Simon Says, follow the leader, Action If, trick shot basketball or bowling (take turns making up trick shots that the other person must complete)

#### Step Three:

Competitive Games e.g. musical chairs, hide/seek, Activity Bingo, tag variations