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HOMELINKS WEEK 13

Happy: Taking Turns

This week, we talked about how the feeling **"happy"** helps children remember to **take turns**. When children take turns, everyone feels happy. Taking turns can be difficult for young children because they need to regulate their impulses and have patience. Young children are just learning to master this as they move from the egocentric "me" stage to the more group-conscious "us" stage. Gentle reminders in the moment and acknowledgement when children take turns will help them learn about this democratic principle.

Your child has learned that taking turns works best when we each name our turn. For example, when it's your child's turn, they can say, **"My turn"** and pat their hand on their chest to indicate this. You can do the same for your turn. This can also work with a sibling or friend. The hand movements (patting your own chest and pointing to your play partner) help to guide the back-and-forth action of taking turns. Your child also learned some communication scripts that can help decide who will go first during play. We practiced being kind and saying, **"Would you like to go first?"** and **"Can I please go first next time?"**

See reverse for ways your entire family can learn from this week's lesson!

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Coach Turn-Taking During Daily Activities

- Acknowledge your child when he/she actively takes turns. Explicitly name the skill: *"I see Huang and you taking turns. I see two happy faces."*
- Set up activities where your child can practice turn-taking with you, a sibling, or a playmate. Activities could include doing a puzzle as a pair, stacking blocks, or making a simple art project. Younger children will need prompts and acknowledgement, but the practice will be worth it.
- Practice taking turns with your child by saying, *"Would you like to go first? Can I go first next time?"*

Family Fun: Playful Ways to Practice

- THE TALKING STICK. Find a nice stick and decorate it with your child. Keep the stick nearby and use it as a way to make sure that every family member gets a turn to talk during conversation times. The family member holding the stick is the speaker. The rest of the family listens respectfully with good eye contact. Some families have used a river rock, painted it, and called it the Talking Stone. A "talking" object allows family members to hold something that shows everyone whose turn it is. Make up a fun, nonverbal family signal that would prompt a family member to stop if they talk too long (the time-out signal, the cutting motion, etc.). Reassure all that the reason we sometimes need to have someone stop talking is because others also need and want a turn.
- BOARD GAMES. Simple board games are a great way to practice turn-taking. Kids love to have their parents' attention too! Use the words (*"My turn … Your turn"*) and motions (hand movements) to keep track of each other's turns. Tell your child that every once in a while, you will pretend to take two turns. Your child's job is to kindly remind you, *"Remember, we take turns."*
- HIDE-AND-SEEK. Children love this game, and it is a great way to create happy feelings while you and your child take turns. Make a big deal about whose turn it is to hide and whose turn it is to seek. Occasionally, be sure to go first so your child gets practice not always being first.

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