



Being Fair

Fairness is a hard concept for young children to understand. It includes being able to see from another's view. Because preschoolers are egocentric, they see the world from their own perspective. They are not yet able to see another's position. Around age five, children are able to see another person's point of view. That doesn't mean that it comes naturally without your help or guidance.

What is fairness? CHARACTER COUNTS!

(www.charactercounts.org) defines fairness as:

- Being open-minded, listening to other's
- Taking turns and sharing
- Playing by the rules
- Taking up for others
- Not taking advantage of or blaming others



Fairness doesn't always mean equal. In a study of siblings, Laurie Kramer, Department of Human and Community Development, University of Illinois, found that kids usually understand different treatment if given a reason for it. So, how do children learn about fairness?

Tips for fostering fairness:

- **Model fairness.** Children model behaviors they see. Adults show kids how to be fair by not comparing or showing favoritism for one child over another, having consistent reasonable rules, and apologizing when you make a mistake.

- **Explain the reason for different treatment.** "John has outgrown his shoes and you need a new jacket."
- **Help your child learn to consider feelings and ideas of others.** Sharing teaches a child to think beyond getting what she wants to the awareness of others' rights and wants.
- **Playtime with friends.** This provides opportunities to learn taking turns, sharing, compromising, and solving problems.
- **Establish limits.** "Johnny is coming over. If there are toys you don't want to share, let's put them away. All toys left out need to be shared."
- **Take turns.** Help siblings learn how to work out a way to take turns or play together when they want the same toy.
- **Reinforce fairness and it's effect.** "You made her happy when you shared your toys" or "How would you feel if he didn't share his toys with you?"
- **Stick up for those who are treated unfairly.** "Everyone needs a turn that wants one" or "No name-calling allowed."
- **Share only things that belong to them.** "That's your brother's, so you can't use it without asking."
- **Grandma's rule:** "If you cut the cake, you choose last."
- **Hold regular family meetings.** Children learn to hear all views, assert ideas, cooperate, and make decisions.
- **Reading books.** Children's books are a wonderful way to introduce and reinforce fairness. Try: *A Bargain for Francis* by Russell Hoban.

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