



SIX RULES FOR SHARING

- 1) **Children should not be forced to share.** Forced sharing (e.g., “Sweetie, you need to share that toy with your sister.”) is not really sharing because we are telling the child to do so. Children truly share when it is *their* idea, not ours.
- 2) **Put ‘Special’ Toys Away.** When the child is playing in a ‘public’ setting (e.g., living room) and he/she doesn’t want a sib playing with his/her ‘special’ toys (like the precious Thomas the Tank Engines toy set), then he/she should put the special toys away somewhere safe and out of reach (i.e. *in a private location such as a bedroom, off limits for others to use.*)
- 3.) **First Come First Serve.** Otherwise, all toys are public toys and “fair game”, available for all to use, on a *first come first serve* basis.
- 4.) **Follow the 10 Minute Rule:** When a child wants a toy that the other child is using invoke the 10-minute rule. The 10-Minute Rule states that the child who first began playing with the toy is allowed to continue playing with that toy for 10 minutes after a peer or sibling expresses a desire to play with the same toy. The other child must find a different toy to play with until the 10-minute time is up. If the child with possession becomes bored with the toy before the 10 minutes is up, then the other child is allowed to play with the toy. If the child with possession is still wanting to play with the toy after 10 minutes, he or she must then give up the toy and move on to something else. Typically, the latter scenario is rarely applicable as children shift their interests fairly rapidly.
- 5) **Coin Toss or Possession Arrow.** If the children arrive at a toy at the same time and both children want to play with that toy, then we flip a coin (or use a possession arrow i.e. you won the toss last, now your brother gets it) to determine who gets to play with the toy next.
- 6) **Promote true sharing.** It’s good to share for two reasons: First (the selfish reason), if you share with your brother/sister, then they’ll share with you. Second (the altruistic reason), when you share with your brother/sister you make them happy.