



Parenting the Preschooler

Social Competence & Emotional Well-Being Fact Sheets

How have you seen your child make compromises?

Ages & Stages

PRESCHOOLER A child who is 3 to 5 years of age.

YOUNG CHILD A child who is 0 to 8 years of age.

Minding Our Language

Families come in all shapes, sizes, and styles. A “family” may include people who are related by blood, by marriage, and by choice. “Parents” may be biological, step-, foster, adoptive, legally appointed, or something else. When we use the words “family” and “parent” in these materials, we do so inclusively and with great respect for all adults who care for and work with young people.

Learning how to compromise, or give and take, is hard for young children. Preschoolers often think of themselves first, so learning to see someone else’s point of view is hard for them. When preschoolers compromise, they learn that if both people give up part of what they want, then both people can get something. To compromise, children need to be able to share, take turns, solve problems, and make choices.

Children need a lot of help from loving adults to help them see that learning to give and take is important. Being flexible and keeping other people’s feelings in mind will give your preschooler social skills that they will use throughout life. But, as with any skill; the more they practice, the better they will be!

Try some of the following to help your child learn to compromise:

- Be a good role model! As an adult you make compromises throughout the day. Help your child learn to compromise by pointing out how you are compromising with someone and talking with them about it. Help your child see that you compromise with people often and that you still feel okay after you compromise!
- Share with your preschooler. Offer to share your food, your seat on the couch, or toys when the two of you are playing. Your child will be more likely to share and be flexible with others if they see you do it, too!
- Help your child learn how to compromise. If they are fighting over a toy with another child, ask if there is a way that they can both play with it. Give the children a chance to solve the problem on their own.
- Talk about other people’s feelings often. As your child plays with others, help label their feelings and other people’s feelings as they happen.
- Find books about feelings at your local library or bookstore and read them together. Talk about the different feelings you read about in the stories.
- Help your preschooler learn to think about what others want and need. For example, if you are making dinner and your preschooler wants chicken nuggets but you know their sister does not like nuggets, ask, “Do you think your sister would like those too?” Then ask, “What things could we make that you both like?”
- Talk with your child to help them think about other people’s wants and needs. For example, if you know that you need to be at child care by 7 a.m. and your preschooler is slow in the morning, talk with them about what you can both do to help make sure that you get there on time.
- Give your child choices that you can live with. Instead of telling them to pick up their shoes, ask if they would like to put their shoes away now or after they have a snack.
- Help them understand that their feelings are important, too. As you teach your child to compromise, also teach them to consider the other person’s feelings as well as their own, because both are important. Help

them understand that compromising does not mean having to give up everything they want. The compromise solution should work for both people.

- Catch your child compromising! If you see that they share or are compromising without your help, praise them!
- Be patient! It may take time, but if you model the behavior and encourage your child, they will learn how to compromise. This will make life much easier for both of you!

Find Out More

MSU Extension provides the following resources for parents and caregivers of preschoolers and young children at no or low cost. Be sure to check out these and other MSU Extension resources available at www.extension.msu.edu.

Extension Extras (<https://bit.ly/2LC2vdX>) – These compilations of news articles, activities, parenting tips and advice are published online Monday through Friday. The resources are designed for parents and caregivers of young children who are home all day during the novel coronavirus pandemic. Each day has a theme: Mindful Mondays, Tips on Tuesday, Working Wednesdays, Thinking Thursday, and Fun Fridays.

Extension Extras Enrichment Kits (<https://bit.ly/35QAplQ>) – These kits feature five or six early childhood activities with learning goals focused in areas such as social and emotional health, literacy, and STEM; a supply list; suggested children's books; introduction letters explaining how to use the materials; and an evaluation. The kits are available as free downloads.

Early Childhood Videos (<https://bit.ly/3ioyEkS>) – These short videos offer parents and caregivers of young children information on parenting topics. Titles include "Perspective Taking," "Family Movies," "Goals of Misbehavior," "Using Thinking and Feeling Words," "The Waiting Game," and "When Siblings Fight."

Building Early Emotional Skills (BEES) in Young Children (<https://bit.ly/38XW4KI>) – This page provides links to a variety of free online parenting courses, workshops, and events offered by MSU Extension for parents and caregivers of young children aged 0 to 3.

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