

COOPERATION AGE-BY-AGE

0 to 6 months

The true social smile begins at about 6 months. Babies' social play is generally noticed during feeding and bathing. They respond to any physical contact game such as tickles, head on baby's tummy, and bouncing. They become interested in toys in their crib or playpen and will play by kicking a mobile or waving a rattle. This is the beginning of socialization and cooperation in its simplest form.

6 months to 1 year

From about 6 months on to one year, a child can share a cookie with a teacher or share blocks when they build a tower. As the teacher puts one block on top of another and the baby follows suit, they are taking turns and cooperating. They can interact with peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake and share simple dancing and singing games. Reading to a child and helping her point to the pictures is an important social activity.

1 to 2 years

Children at this age can be helpful by bringing you objects you request and following simple directions (open the door, put the pillow on the bed). They enjoy being helpers. They try to feed themselves and their dolls. They hold their own cup and offer you a drink. They use their own name and love to sing with you and listen to rhymes. They do say many "No's," and although they share with you, they may not be willing to share with other toddlers. They understand nonverbal cues and can tell by the expressions on your face when they have misbehaved. At this age, since a child is not sure of her identity, giving away something can feel like giving away a part of herself.

2 to 3 years

Children ask countless questions. They want to please others, are friendly to most adults, and like to talk to them. They are now learning to wait for their turn. They are helpful by setting the table for snack, clearing the table, or using a sponge to wipe the table. They like to help adults. They are learning to share and will offer a child another toy. They are learning to say "Please," "May I," "Thank you," and "Excuse me." They like to play group games and begin to follow simple rules. They are not always fair in their play, but much more so than the toddler.

4 to 5 years

Children in this age group like to use their imagination and begin to develop plots, change characters' voices, and assume different roles. Play allows them to become flexible, creative, develop vocabulary, practice empathy, delay gratification, and control their aggression. They invent complex games and, in doing so, share, cooperate, and help one another. They begin to learn about others' cultures and values. They understand what a family is and that there are different kinds of families. More feelings and emotions are expressed in their play. They can play "follow the leader" types of games. They begin to play board games where they learn to take turns and cooperate.