

Inviting Others to Play: Ages 4-5

Being able to ask another child to play is an important social skill. It helps your child:

- Develop preferences in play – both in activities and playmates
- Learn how to make friends
- Gain self-confidence

Ideas to try with your child:

- Model for them, by asking them or another person to play. “I love playing Go Fish. Eric will you play this with me?”
- Show or explain that you can take a friend’s hand or tap them gently on the shoulder to show that you want to play.
- Suggest games that can be played by many children at once or those that involve buddies, like Freeze Tag or Duck, Duck, Goose.
- Let your child choose between activities that require 2 or more children such as playing a board game (Candyland) or a card game (Go Fish).

If your child is struggling:

- Practice asking each other to do activities in your daily routine. “Lara will you help me sweep the porch? Now you ask me to help you get the broom.”
- Start with simple phrases like, “Will you play with me?” Gradually encourage your child to use names of persons and games.

Going further:

- In a play group, invite your child to take turns teaching others a game.
- Ask your child to invite a shy child into a game with others. Prompt him with “Take Sarah’s hand and walk with her to the game of tag.”

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 4-5** that parents can help improve at home.