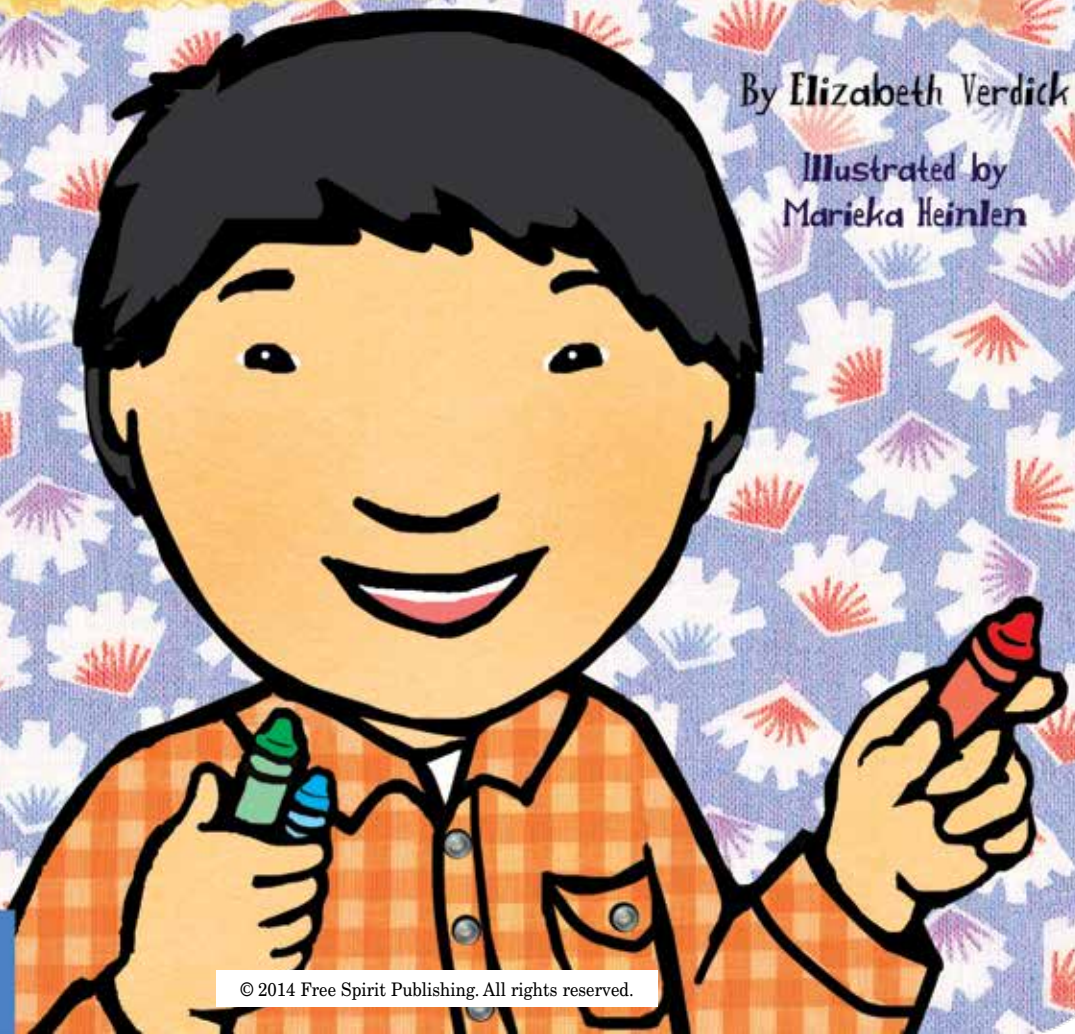


# Sharing Time

By Elizabeth Verdick

Illustrated by  
Marieka Heinlen



Some things are fun to share ...

like smiles, laughs, and hugs.

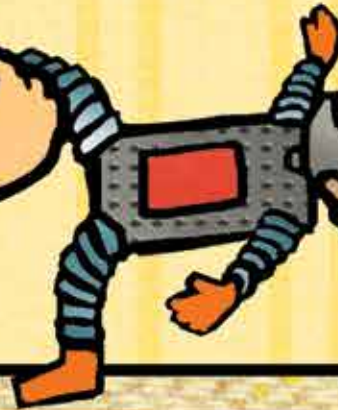


Some things are hard to share.

She might  
take it.

He might  
break it.

Mine!  
Mine!  
**MINE!**



# Sharing Tips for Parents & Caregivers

During toddlerhood, children gain independence and begin to forge their own identity. They lay claim to *their* home, *their* bed, *their* toys. That sense of ownership is a first step toward sharing. Yet, toddlers have trouble understanding that some things *don't* belong to them. They may grab toys from each other and throw tantrums if something is taken away. Keep in mind that sharing is a skill that develops very slowly. To help little ones take steps toward learning to share, give them the gift of your patience as they learn.

- Reinforce the lessons from this book.** Take time to practice “sharing words”: “May I use that?” “Can I have a turn?” Offer children specific praise whenever you catch them sharing: “I love the way you shared that toy with your friend.” Talk about how fun it is to share smiles, laughs, and hugs.
- Set an example.** Share with your child any time you can. Divide pieces of banana between you. Let your child try on your sunglasses briefly and return them to you. Every so often, ask to hold your child’s beloved toy for a moment—then thank your child and give it back.
- Set up sharing situations.** Play games that encourage turn-taking. At the park, help your child take turns on the slide or swing. At home, host short play dates to give children the opportunity to play together and share toys. In groups, let children take turns handing out snacks.
- Set up for success.** Before friends come to play, put away your child’s most cherished belongings to keep them safe. Invite your child to pick out toys to

share. Be sure your toddler fully understands that sharing toys is *temporary*—the toys will still belong to your child when the play date ends. Stay attuned to what the children are doing; gently step in if problems occur.

- Be prepared.** A timer can be a helpful tool for playmates and siblings. Give each child a turn with a favored toy, letting everyone know that when the timer goes off their turn is over.
- Don't force sharing.** It may be hard to watch children refuse to share, but insisting is likely to make a child feel more possessive or threatened. Don't punish a toddler for not sharing. Instead, look for opportunities to praise when children *do* cooperate. Also help toddlers learn ways to handle “no.” Practice taking deep breaths to calm down, finding another toy to play with, or asking an adult for help.



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