

The 8 Most Controversial Rules in *It's OK Not to Share*

1. Teaching 3-5 year-olds to read is NOT smart.

You may think putting Johnny in preschool and drilling math and reading will give him a step ahead. Actually, the opposite is true. In fact, long-term studies show that kids in academic preschools do *worse* in later school years, and kids who PLAY do better.

2. Say 'yes' when your child starts swearing.

Censorship rarely works. Kids love to say banned words – so let them. In the bathroom.



3. Don't make kids say 'sorry.'

Model manners, don't force them. Saying "sorry" is a magic word that lets kids off the hook. Instead teach them to take responsibility and take action (ex: bring a tissue to the crying child) to set things right.

4. Friends should be allowed to hit each other.

Roughhousing – even play boxing – is social and healthy puppy play. Some kids need physical play to bond and make friends. If everyone's having fun, it's a good playful game.



5. Boys can wear tutus.

Play that crosses gender roles is creative and harmless. Kids have the right to choose their own play themes. And they need your support – whatever their interests.

6. Let kids play with dead animals.

Before someone your child loves dies (grandpa, parent, beloved pet) introduce him to the reality of death. Start with dead worms or dead birds. Beginning to understand death is a major task of the preschool years.

7. Let your child play with toy guns, swords, lasers and all.

Don't censor a child's play. If a child pretends to be a pirate, he won't grow up to be a pirate. Respect a child's right to play – even if that includes saying "bang! bang!" Kids need to use props when they play and follow their own play ideas.

8. "You can't play" = AOK.

Kids have the right to choose their own playmates. Taking social risks, coping with rejection and gaining friendship skills are important life lessons from the earliest years.