

# Changing Partner Roles

*You're handling the plates carefully.*



*Junior Partner*

Partner with your child in an activity that allows her to move gradually from less to more responsibility.

Experimenting with partner roles helps your child learn to lead as well as follow.



*Senior Partner*

*Where do you want me to put these?*



## Why this is important

Your child is old enough to experience responsibility in various helper, partner, and leadership roles. Different situations require differing balances of cooperation and leadership. Children need experience in these three roles if they are to function well in group situations.

## What you do

- Use the simple task of setting the table to guide your child through various leadership roles.
- Invite your child to help you set the table. In this junior partner role she helps you as you lead the task. *Can you please place the forks and plates on the table?*
- Move to equal partnership for this task when she feels comfortable with helping you set the table. Together, decide who will put what on the table: *I'll be responsible for the serving dishes. What do you plan to put on the table?*
- Watch for signs that your child is ready to take full responsibility for setting the table. Assign her the leadership or senior partner role so that she knows she will place most of the items on the table and give you directions on where to place the rest.

## Another idea

You can plan other activities that will allow your child to move through these three roles. For example, you could make paper mosaics. At first you direct the cutting and placement of the paper pieces. With the next mosaic, you could both share the responsibility. Finally, she could make all decisions about a third mosaic and give you directions.

### Let's read together!

*Jamaica Tag-Along*  
by Juanita Havill