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.