

Fairness. Sharing. You probably learned about those two things before you learned how to read, right?

Well sometimes, grownups seem to forget about fairness and sharing – or at least they need a reminder.

On Tuesday night, the main theme of President Obama’s “State of the Union” address was fairness, sharing and working together toward a common goal – getting more Americans back to work.

“We can either settle for a country where a shrinking number of people do really well while a growing number of Americans barely get by,” he said. “Or we can restore an economy where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share and everyone plays by the same set of rules.”

The President said the wealthiest Americans – people who earn millions or even billions of dollars a year – should pay their fair share in taxes.

The reason? They can afford to pay more, without having to worry about paying the grocery bill or the heating bill or saving for college.

At the same, he pushed for tax cuts for the other 98 percent of all Americans – and tax breaks for businesses that create new jobs here in the United States, to help bring down the nation’s unemployment rate.

“In the last 22 months, businesses have created more than 3 million jobs,” the President said.

But the unemployment rate remains high – 8.5 percent.

In his speech, Mr. Obama reminded his audience that he inherited the economic crisis from his Republican predecessor, George W. Bush.

And he said he would fight to ensure that the government doesn’t go back to the same policies that caused the crisis to begin with.

“I want to speak about how we move forward,” he said.

In the past year, the Republicans who control the majority in the House have blocked much of what the President wants to do to create even more jobs.

They have ideas of their own about job creation. And they are strongly against any tax increase for the wealthy, claiming it’ll prevent the creation of new jobs.

They Republicans have accused the President of trying to create “class warfare” between the wealthy and the rest of the country – “the politics of envy,” as House Speaker John Boehner, a Republican, called it, according to the Washington Post.

“No feature of the Obama presidency has been sadder than its constant effort to divide us, to curry favor with some Americans by castigating others,” Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels added, in the official Republican response to the President’s address.

“You can call this ‘class warfare’ all you want,” Mr. Obama said in response to his Republican critics.

“But asking a billionaire to pay at least as much as his secretary in taxes? Most Americans would call that common sense.”

Daniels also conceded that “the President did not cause the economic and fiscal crises that continue in America tonight.” (“Fiscal” means money-related.)

“But he was elected on a promise to fix them,” the governor continued. On Tuesday night, the President pledged a number of ways to fix the economy.

But he said he couldn’t do what he wants to do if the Republicans in Congress keep blocking his legislation.

“I will keep taking actions that help the economy grow,” Mr. Obama said. “But I can do a whole lot more with your help,” he said, speaking directly to the Republicans.

The President focused almost all of his speech on the economy.

But he also talked about his foreign policy achievements in the past year.

“For the first time in nine years, there are no Americans fighting in Iraq,” he said. “For the first time in two decades, Osama bin Laden is not a threat to this country,” he added — a reference to the terrorist mastermind who was killed by U.S. service members in Pakistan last year.

“We’ve begun to wind down the war in Afghanistan,” Mr. Obama said later in his address. “Tens of thousands of our troops have come home.”

The United States stands to save billions of dollars in war-related expenses now that the war in Iraq is over and the war in Afghanistan appears to be nearing an end.

The President proposed putting half of that money toward reducing the federal deficit.

(A deficit is when you spend more money than you’re taking in.)

The other half, he said, should go toward upgrading our nation’s infrastructure – repairing and rebuilding roads, bridges, schools and other public things we all use every day. He says that will create even more jobs.

But ultimately, in order to fix the nation’s economy, he says everyone needs to pitch in and pay their fair share – including the people who have the most to spare.

“Do we want to keep these tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans?” Mr. Obama said. “Or do we want to keep our investments in everything else – like education and medical research, a strong military and care for our veterans? Because if we’re serious about paying down our debt, we can’t do both. The American people know what the right choice is.

“This nation is great because we built it together,” he added, near the end of his address. “This nation is great because we worked as a team.

“As long as we’re joined in common purpose,” the President said, “our future is hopeful. And the state of our union will always be strong.”