

IT'S SO HARD TO WAIT!

Activities to increase frustration tolerance

From Christine Hierlmaier Nelson ©2010
Author of "Green Yellow Go! Nat Knows Bananas" a picture book about patience
www.patientparents.com

Birth to Age 2

—Know the signs of frustration.

- crying
- lack of eye contact
- throwing toys
- falling asleep (Infants may do this when overwhelmed.)

—Distract them.

Show young children how to transition with:

- singing
- a book
- another toy
- a snack

—Check the vitals.

Are they:

- Hungry?
- Tired?
- Overstimulated?

—Model it.

When your child becomes frustrated, you should:

- speak calmly
- get down on her level
- show affection and smile

—Introduce the Time-Out. (~age 2)

Designate a chair or bottom step for brief time-outs to teach:

- consequences
- a positive coping skill

Ages 3 to 5:

—At this developmental stage, continue to use time-outs *immediately* after unacceptable behavior, with the length of time matching the children's age, up to 5 minutes, or until they calm themselves and are sitting quietly. Avoid interacting with children during time-outs.

Here are some other games and activities to try:

—**Delay Gratification Game.** (Using a timer can be helpful with this game.)

- Eating dessert after they have eaten dinner
- Remaining quiet while you are on the telephone
- Eating breakfast after they have made the bed
- Playing outside after they have put away their toys
- Using the computer after they have tidied their room

—**Save and Spend.** (~age 4)

To avoid tantrums at the store, and to teach your child the value of money and responsibility, have him:

- save half of any money he receives
- use his spending money to purchase occasional treats
- offer chores for him to earn more saving and spending money
- shop to learn needs, wants, and saving for special things

—**Count, Breathe, Choose.**

Children at this age can learn self-control by:

- counting from 1-10 or 10-1
- closing their eyes and focusing on their breathing
- choosing between two appropriate options, offered by parent

—**Model It.**

When you become frustrated around your children, try to:

- remain calm
- explain that you need a time-out, and step back physically
- think big picture; imagine that the traffic or long line or crashed computer is protecting you from another unforeseen disaster
- stay in the moment; you can't get it back!

Christine Hierlmaier Nelson is a mother of two awesome girls, and speaks to parenting groups and early childhood educators about patience techniques.