

Questions & Answers

Q: My daughter has no patience. If she wants something, she wants it immediately. Her teacher says her impatience is becoming a problem at school. What can I do to fix this?

A: In this era of on-demand entertainment and instant communication, it can be challenging for kids to learn to wait. However, patience is a vital ingredient for school success. It takes patience to wait one's turn and keep from interrupting others when they're talking.

A lack of patience may also affect school performance. In one well-known Stanford University study, researchers told preschoolers they could have one marshmallow right away or wait a few minutes and get two marshmallows. When these students graduated from high school, researchers found that the kids who chose to wait were more successful students. They even had higher SAT scores!

Here's how to help your daughter develop more patience:

- Explain that everyone has to learn to wait, and that you're going to help her with this skill.
- Give her opportunities to be patient. When she asks for something, say, "In a minute." If you're on the phone, develop a hand signal that means, "When I'm finished."
- Be patient yourself. Stay calm when you're stuck in traffic, for example. Say something like, "It looks like we're going to be in the car for a while. Let's use the time to play a game."

With some practice, your child will learn the patience she needs to be successful in school—and in life.

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