

After the Buzz, social thinking ideas for parents and caregivers

From *What's the Buzz?* for Early Learners: A complete social skills foundation course



Lesson 5: Waiting

After the Buzz presents ideas for parents, guardians and educators to encourage the generalisation of the social skills and the social thinking the children have learnt in the session. Children rely on our commitment to consolidate these skills by modelling them, and emphasising the language and the ideas used in the lesson. Consequently, we recommend that parents and teachers use the session topics as continuing themes each week. Here are a few practical ideas to teach children how-to wait appropriately from Lesson three, 'Waiting'.



Different strokes for young folks

Keep in mind that children have a different sense of time than we adults do. Everything is new and in the moment. To restrain that energy, even briefly, is challenging. Given this fact, it can be easy to over focus on their inability to wait. Noticing poor waiting skills is only half the equation. The most important half is to teach your children how-to wait. This requires teaching and a lot of repetition.

Expectations

Always play to the top of a child's capacity. Expect them to wait.

Teach what "Wait a minute" looks like and feels like

Children often hear their parents say, "Hold on, just wait a minute!". Many kids wonder, "How long is a minute?" "When is a minute finished?" "How will I know?" "What does a minute feel like?" and "How long away is 'later', really?" Show them how long a minute is. Practice this frequently. Use the clock on your phone to see how close your child can get to guessing 60 seconds. Once they've mastered one minute start practicing how long five minutes takes because, "Hold on, I'll be with you in five minutes" can be a lifesaver.

Go visual

Provide your children with a strong visual signal when you ask them to wait. This might be as easy as raising your hand gently up to make a stop signal as you say, "Hold on, wait!"

Wait and count

For beginners, you can ask them to wait and then count, "1, 2, 3" as they wait. Once they've achieved the wait provide praise and follow through on what they were waiting for. Be clever and gradually build the waiting period out.

Timers

What about using a timer or colourful goo timer to show how long your child has to wait?
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzFosq94WOk>)

Seize on natural opportunities

Create natural opportunities for your child to practice waiting. For example, when your child wants you to get something for them acknowledge their request, and say you need to do one thing before you get it for them. Keep

the bargain so they see that waiting pays off. When you're playing a game with them work it so that they have to wait in order to build or work together.

Slow down your response time

When your child wants something when you're busy avoid instantly stopping and rewarding them with what they want. Ask them to wait. Reassure them you'll get it in a moment. Your task is to help them strengthen their waiting capacity. Do this as often as possible.

Establish clear boundaries

Teach your child how to ask politely; "Mum, may I have drink?" "Can someone help me with this in a minute?" "Dad, can you please pass me the Lego from the top shelf?" When kids ask respectfully they are more open about facing the prospect of briefly waiting.

Acknowledge their frustration and state your confidence in them

As your child struggles to wait say, "Oh, I see you're finding it hard to wait. Hey, not long now. You can do it." This lets them know that you know how they're feeling. Your confidence and encouragement may seem like a small thing, but it can make a big difference to steady them. Once your child has waited successfully, tell them that you are proud of them and that they handled waiting really well.

Teach them how-to wait

First, point out that everyone finds waiting tricky, but everyone can learn how-to do it better. Teach your children what the research has revealed over the years. It teaches us that the kids who become good at waiting have learnt how to distract themselves away from the waiting at just the right time! This makes the waiting bearable and also adds immeasurably to their success in the future.

Brainstorm more waiting ideas;

Brainstorm with your child how they can wait better. Create a chart of ideas. Here are a few to get you started:

Play a hand game with someone <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvuGApvNF58>

Look out the window and daydream

Look through a book or read it

Talk quietly (to someone or to yourself)

Practice tongue twisters <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv1VWc1V1Mc>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zkei7SUyluY>

Draw a picture

Practice a new spelling word

Practice multiplication tables

Count up to 10, to 20 or to 100 in your head

Count backwards from 20 in your head

Count backwards from 100 in your head

Think about magic or fairies or favourite stories

Play a game that you can play by yourself

Sing a song in your head

Say a poem in your head

Photocopiable and Online Resources

These resources can also be downloaded from www.whatsthebuzz.net.au