

Understanding Patience in Pre-School Children

It all begins with the child as an infant. Immediately meeting the needs of the infant positively and lovingly teaches the child to trust the caregiver adult and develop a sense of security with the people around it. As the child grows, it becomes easier to introduce the concept and practice of patience. A secure child can practice learning patience with positive anticipation of needs met. It is important, however, to be very familiar with the milestones of development of different age levels of children. The teaching and modeling of patience must always revolve around what the child can and can not yet do. How do you teach a child to exercise patience? In just about any situation a parent would want his child to exercise patience, endurance or forbearance. There are so many creative ways this can be done. First let's take a peek at the parent who models patience. Babies can sense, see and hear reactions. Toddlers watch and those children who are already very much aware of their surroundings are more sensitive and alert to actions and reactions adults make. Let's say a toddler asks for water and mom's hands are tied for the moment...well, mom should attend to the toddler! No question about that! Toddler might even be choking on something and just seems to be asking for water but actually needs help! Now a three year old asking for water can be challenged to count while waiting for mom to get water. A four year old can be asked why he needs a glass of water while mom needs more time to get it. How he would just love to try to explain why he needs one. Pay attention to your children all the time. And when there are moments that you can't attend to the immediately, the child would most likely be secure enough to be willing to wait. By experience, one effective way of teaching patience is to practice this virtue daily and naturally as needed. A five year old might just ask why he needs to be patient about matters while a six year old would want to see his friends practice patience, too, to believe in it. If a seven year old objects and says no to your encouragement to be patient, that is one indicator that he is listening to your encouragement. Patiently remind your seven year old to be more polite next time when objecting. What a joy it is to relate to, speak to, play with, work with pre-school children! And one very helpful reminder for all when in the presence of pre-schoolers is to remember that the children have very delicate feelings. Each one to his own, so to speak. Be patient! But also be reminded that being patient does not mean being complacent with or ignoring behaviour that are disagreeable. Lovingly and carefully check on such behavior with creative ways.

About the Author

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