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## Teaching the Virtues: Patience

### Waiting is the Hardest Part

By Mary Dixon Lebeau



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When waiting in line with her 4-year-old twin girls Anna and Josie, Jennifer Miller, a Maryland-based mom, has her own special way of refocusing her girls' attention. "Whether it's waiting in line or waiting for dinner, I just refocus their attention on something else. Distraction can be a very useful tool with young children," Miller says.

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She already sees evidence that her girls are beginning to learn to entertain themselves. "Sure, they still whine when they have to wait for something," Miller admits. "But more and more, I see them automatically turning their attention where they know I'll be directing it anyway."

**The Waiting is the Hardest Part**

As Tom Petty croons in one of his songs, in this hurry up and wait society, the waiting is indeed the hardest part. Children would love nothing more than the hours and minutes between now and when a vacation or plate of spaghetti would materialize. Therefore, patience is a key to success.

Self-control and patience are important if kids are going to succeed in school as well as life after school, so the sooner they learn it the better. And it's your job as a parent to give your kids that start.

"Successfully teaching patience is more than just teaching your children to wait," says Corinne Gregory, founder and president of SocialSmarts, a nationally recognized program of teaching social skills, character and values to kids. "It also means teaching them how to being willing to wait calmly, particularly in the face of delay. Waiting with impatient body language or mannerisms like groans or eye-rolling is not patience."

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