

10 Tips to Help Develop Self Control in Children



1. Do activities that require you and the child to follow step by step directions such as playing a board game or following a recipe.
 2. Let children wait. If you are busy doing something and a child requests your attention, it is beneficial for the child to learn to wait patiently for you to finish.
 3. Provide verbal or visual cues for how long a child may have to wait. Explain to the child that when you are done writing this note, you can play the game. Set a timer and tell the child that when the timer goes off he/she can play with a certain toy.
 4. Partner up together to solve a problem. If the child is having trouble completing a difficult task, offer to help to assist but do not take over. Encourage the child to remain in control even though frustrated. Teach the child self control skills when frustrations are on the rise. Try using some self calming strategies - <http://yourtherapysource.com/calm.html> .
 5. Work on something that takes a long time to finish. Try completing a large puzzle together over a weeks time, baking bread from scratch (waiting for it to rise), growing a plant or making rock candy.
 6. Model self control. Adults get frustrated and can lose self control too. Show the child that even though you are losing your patience or annoyed you remain calm and in control.
 7. Provide suggestions to the child if they are not displaying good self control. For example, suggest that he/she plays with a different toy while waiting for a toy a friend is playing with. Exercise can be an excellent outlet to reduce frustration and anger.
 8. Don't set expectations too high. Remember the age of the child. For example, a young child may easily lose self control waiting in a long line next to a large selection of candy. Older children may have less self control following a bad day at school. Children who are expected to sit for hours without burning off any energy will be at risk for losing self control. Overwhelming, crowded or loud places may put children at risk for melting down.
- Some children may benefit from a sensory diet to help improve self control. Check out Cut and Paste Sensory Diet - <http://yourtherapysource.com/sensorydiet.html> or the Sensational Brain Membership - <http://yourtherapysource.com/brainworks.html> to get started.
9. Provide down time. Children are expected to go all the time - school, after school activities and sometimes evening activities. Children who are over-scheduled will most likely melt down easier. Allow plenty of time for children to explore their own environments at home and with friends. This creates realistic life situations where self control is required and they will learn through practice.
 10. Know when to back off. Children need to develop self control skills for themselves. Once you observe that a child is gaining control, let him/her proceed without your help.