

For Ages
4-7

Waiting Is Not Forever

Elizabeth Verdick
Illustrated by Marieka Heinlen



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free spirit
PUBLISHING®



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To Andrew, Lucas, Justin, and Nate,
who inspired this book one summer.
—E.V.

For Pam and Walt, who worked so hard
to realize a dream and who raised a few
of the most patient people I know.
—M.H.



You do lots of waiting.

Sometimes you wait
for small things . . .

A snack . . .
the line to end . . .



your turn on the swings.



Tips and Activities for Caregivers and Parents

When you think about it, children are almost always waiting for something . . . to be picked up or dropped off, to get to do their favorite activities, to grow, to gain new skills. They wait for their birthday, holidays, a new sibling; they wait for permission, for recognition, for greater independence. All this waiting—this anticipating—brings mixed feelings: excitement, anxiety, frustration, boredom, hope. As adults, we can recognize what children are experiencing in these moments and find ways to help.

Teach Waiting Words

Yes, waiting is frustrating! But it's also a fact of life. How we talk about waiting can help put a positive spin on it. Encourage children to avoid complaining while waiting. Instead, they can find something fun to do while they wait, and stay calm by using *waiting words*:

“Waiting is not forever.”

“I’m calm. I’m patient.”

“I can chill a little longer.”

“This will be worth the wait!”

“I can wait a while with a smile.”

Use Visuals

When you make waiting more concrete for children, they know what to expect and feel a greater sense of control. Use visual timers, countdown calendars, and interactive classroom calendars that highlight daily activities and special events. These tools help children develop routines, a sense of time, and the skill of patience.



Teach Wanting/Waiting Signals

At home or in the classroom, it helps to have unspoken signals that enhance communication. Think about how a child tries to get your attention when you're speaking with others, for example. Children may interrupt with questions or requests. Teach children a nonverbal signal they can use to let you know they want you, such as gently touching your arm or shoulder. You can signal back with a hand squeeze or a nod with one finger held up to indicate “Wait.” At first, respond as soon as you can and thank the child for waiting. Over time, you can delay a bit longer, giving a gentle squeeze or special hand signal every few minutes to show that you haven't forgotten the request.

Help Their Bodies and Minds Stay Busy

Waiting isn't as boring when you're actively engaged in some type of activity. Encourage children to think head to toe, finding a variety of ways to keep themselves entertained.

