

Reinforcing Good Behavior

Sitting in a chair is just one of many behavioral issues that parents have to address. Other common behavioral problems include: talking back, throwing tantrums, interrupting, not sharing, and not following home or school rules. Reward programs are usually helpful, but there are some other things to keep in mind as well.

Here are some tips on how to get your child to listen and behave:

- Be a good role model
- Post rules
- Give praise
- Give tokens and stickers
- Have a structure
- Use appropriate discipline
- Be consistent
- Don't make threats

Some children are simply born with more ability to control their impulses than others. Even as infants, some children are more calm and reflective, while others are more active and impulsive. But you can teach children to be patient and to have more self-control. Here are some simple ideas to try.

Teaching Children Self-Control

- **Balloon Game:** Play a game where you have to keep a balloon, or several balloons, up in the air.
- **Slow Animals:** This is a game where children have to imitate animals that move slowly (a turtle, a worm) or fast animals in slow motion.
- **Board Games:** Kids can play board games by the age of three. Play them often to teach children to wait their turn, be a good sport, and play fair.
- **Calming Music:** Slow, peaceful music calms kids (and parents) down almost instantly. Play it when you want your child to be calm and quiet, such as before dinner or at bedtime.
- **Belly Breathing:** Deep breathing that focuses on the lower belly is a classic way to teach relaxation. Practice this several times a day. Yoga is also growing in popularity for children as young as three.
- **Relaxation Corner:** Designate a place in your home or in your child's room where he can go to relax and do quiet things. You might have pillows, a comfortable blanket, quiet games, and so on. Make it a fun place where children will want to go. When your child is wound up and you want him to calm down, have him spend a few minutes in the relaxation corner. This is much better than waiting for him to misbehave and get sent to the time-out corner.