

WAITING & TURN-TAKING

VISUAL TOOLKIT

Gentle picture supports for learning to wait and take turns



Free printable · Print in colour on A4 · For home, classroom & therapy rooms

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Welcome! What's Inside

Five simple tools to make waiting and turn-taking easier to see, understand and practise.

1

The WAIT Card

A calm, clear signal that says “not yet – but soon”. (page 3)

2

My Turn / Your Turn Cards

Big cards plus cut-out cards for games and shared activities. (pages 4–5)

3

What Can I Do While Waiting?

Eight simple activity choices to keep hands and minds busy. (page 6)

4

My Waiting Steps

A five-step visual sequence from “wait” to “my turn”. (page 7)

5

Parent & Educator Guide

How to introduce the toolkit warmly and respectfully. (pages 8–9)

Printing tips

- Print in **colour** on **A4** at **100% (Actual size)**, ideally on card stock.
- Laminate the pages you will use often, then cut along the dashed lines.
- Add Velcro dots, magnets or a lanyard clip so cards are easy to hold and move.
- **You do not need to use everything.** Choose the tools that feel right for your child.

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The WAIT Card

Hold this card up calmly, or place it where your child can see it, when it is not yet time.



WAIT

Waiting is hard. I can do it!

Wait... then it's my turn!

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My Turn & Your Turn

Use with games, toys and shared activities. Point to, or place, the card to show whose turn it is.



MY TURN

I can play, choose or go now!



YOUR TURN

I watch, wait and cheer them on.

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Cut-Out Turn Cards

Cut along the dashed lines. Laminate and add Velcro or magnets to pass between players.



MY TURN

I can go now!



YOUR TURN

I watch and wait.



MY TURN

I can go now!



YOUR TURN

I watch and wait.



MY TURN

I can go now!



YOUR TURN

I watch and wait.



WAIT

Waiting... soon!



WAIT

Waiting... soon!

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What Can I Do While Waiting?

Choose ONE. Point to a picture, or cut the tiles out to make a choice board.



Take three slow breaths

In ... and out ...



Draw or colour

Pick a pencil



Look at a book

Choose a favourite



Squeeze a soft ball

Squish, squish!



Count to ten

Count in my head



Hum a quiet song

Mmm ... la la la



Hug a soft toy

Cuddle time



Build with blocks

Stack them up

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My Waiting Steps

Follow the steps from top to bottom. Point to each step as you go.

1



I hear “wait”.

I want something, but it is not my turn yet. I pause and look at my WAIT card.

2



I take a calm breath.

Breathe in slowly ... breathe out slowly. My body can feel calm.

3



I pick something to do.

I choose one idea from my “What Can I Do While Waiting?” board.

4



I watch the timer.

A sand timer shows me that waiting will end. It is getting closer!

5



My turn!

I did it! Waiting is over. Time to celebrate with a smile or a high five.

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Parent & Educator Guide

How to introduce this toolkit warmly and respectfully.

The big idea

Waiting is a **skill that takes practice**, not a behaviour problem. Time is invisible, so waiting can feel endless – especially for young children and for children who are autistic, have ADHD, anxiety or language differences.

These visuals make **what is happening**, **what to do** and **that waiting will end** easy to see. They are a support you offer *with* a child – never a punishment or a way to control.

Introduce it in five calm steps

1. Pick a calm moment. Introduce the cards when nobody is waiting or upset – not in the middle of a hard moment.

2. Explore together. Look at each card, name it, and let your child touch, colour or decorate them. Ownership matters.

3. Practise with something fun. Use a favourite toy or game and very short waits (5–10 seconds) so success comes quickly.

4. Build up gradually. Lengthen waits a little at a time. Always keep your promise: when the wait ends, it ends.

5. Celebrate specifically. “You waited and chose to draw – that was hard, and you did it!” Praise the effort, not only the result.

Words to try

- “First wait, then your turn.”
- “Waiting is hard. I am right here.”
- “Which waiting activity would you like?”
- “Thank you for waiting so nicely.”

Words & habits to avoid

- “Be patient!” or “Stop whining.”
- Showing the WAIT card as a warning or threat.
- Using it when a need is urgent – hunger, toilet, pain, fear or distress.
- Making the wait longer than promised.

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Making It Work

Keep it flexible, kind and consistent – and adapt it to your child.

Keep it respectful & flexible

- **Offer choice.** Let your child pick which waiting activity or card feels best today.
- **Model it yourself.** “I am waiting for the kettle – I will take three breaths.”
- **Pair with a visual timer.** A sand timer shows how long; the card shows *that* it will end.
- **Personalise.** Add your child’s name, photos or favourite colours. Swap in activities they truly enjoy.
- **Watch for overload.** If your child is distressed, pause the plan and comfort first.
- **Fade gradually.** As confidence grows, use the cards less and let spoken cues take over.
- **Share the plan.** Show teachers, grandparents and carers so everyone uses the same words.

Print & prepare

- Print in colour on A4 at 100% (“Actual size”), ideally on card stock.
- Laminate cards for repeated use and cut along the dashed lines.
- Add Velcro dots, a keyring or a lanyard clip so cards are easy to carry.
- Keep the set together in a pouch or ring binder so it is always at hand.

Our waiting plan

Child's name: _____

Favourite waiting activities: _____

We use the WAIT card when: _____

Every child waits at their own pace. **Be kind, be consistent, and celebrate every small step.**

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