

Messages to parents

WORKSHOP 15

Learning to accept frustration

Dear parents,

Today, *Minipally* told us the story of Prince Wantal, who wanted to have everything, right away. I'm a bit like this little prince, and that's why I'm wearing this beautiful crown today. I need to learn that I cannot always have everything right away. I find this very difficult. *Minipally* taught me that when I am very angry because someone has told me NO, I can:

- Tell myself "stop!"
- Take a deep breath (he even suggested I say "Ahhhh—Whoooo" while I breathe).
- Say that I find it hard, that I'm mad, or that I don't like being told NO.

Ask a big
person
for help.



Busy myself
with another
toy while I wait.

Walk away.

It helps me to react better.

I am also trying to react better when you say NO to me. Encourage me so that it becomes easier and easier for me. I also need you to KEEP SAYING NO when it is necessary, even if I don't like it. It will help me learn that I won't always get what I want.



Minipally Suggestions for parents

Workshop 15: Learning to accept frustration

My child recognizes that it is unpleasant to be told “no”. He is learning to say what is frustrating him and that an adult can help him solve the problem.

- If bedtime leads to conflict with my child, I help him through the transition so that he finds it easier to stop playing: “You want to keep playing, but that’s not possible anymore. It’s bedtime. You find it hard to stop playing, but you can continue building tomorrow. We’ll keep your Lego house. Now you can go choose a story book.” In this way, I teach him that doing something pleasant can help us forget the thing that made us mad.*
- The parent can use “inner language” in front of the child to help him understand what is going on, and think about solutions aloud. For example, by explaining the frustration felt when something we want is not available, or by recalling a situation: “I wanted . . . , the same as Aunt Helen. I was very disappointed. Then I thought about it and realized there might be another place where I could get it. So I called Aunt Helen. She knew where to find one. It was a good thing I asked for her help.”
- “Okay, we were really looking forward to seeing that movie but there are no more seats. Even if I get mad or worked up, there still won’t be any more seats. We have to find a solution. We could do another activity, or choose a different movie.” The parent can then remind the child about this experience when another frustrating situation occurs: “You can’t play . . . right away. Remember what we did when there were no more seats at the cinema?”
- The parent supports his frustrated 3-, 4- or 5-year-old by first accepting the emotion and then helping him find a solution:
 - Do a different activity
 - Wait
 - Ask for help
 - Walk away

* Translated from Sylvie Bourcier, *L’agressivité chez l’enfant de 0 à 5 ans*. Montreal: Éditions du CHU Sainte-Justine, 2008.