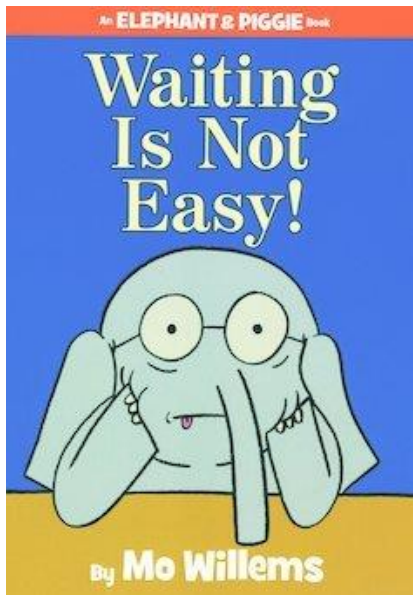


# Children's Lit Kit

Supporting Social Emotional Development through Literature

## BOOK SELECTION

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### **Waiting Is Not Easy!**

By Mo Willems

Hyperion Books for Children

Theodor Seuss Geisel Book Honor

In Mo Willems' beloved Elephant and Piggie book series, children learn about the age-old difficult task of...waiting! In *Waiting Is Not Easy!* Piggie has a surprise for Gerald, but he is going to have to wait for it. And wait. And wait some more! Gerald is excited for the surprise, but all the waiting has him feeling all sorts of different emotions. The book offers a straightforward lesson about the difficult task of learning patience. It highlights how hard it is for all of us to wait for big and exciting moments. Learning to wait patiently requires effort from kids (and even adults). Waiting can seem endless when

kids are looking forward to a future time. Helping kids develop the art of waiting takes some practice but developing a patient perspective is a skill that will serve kids well as they grow. To help kids learn about waiting, the Elephant and Piggie book *Waiting is Not Easy!* is a great place to begin. The two best friends' endearing friendship shines through and is a good reminder for all of us that waiting patiently usually pays off.

## BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER READING

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**Examples of activities that can be used before, during, and after reading *Waiting Is Not Easy!* to promote social and emotional development:**

Before reading, ask children about a time when they had to wait for something. Ask for examples of a time they had to wait a period of time, for a friend, for a surprise, or for a toy. Ask them what waiting feels like. How do you act when you are waiting? Ask them about the emotional feeling of "being excited." How does it feel to be excited? What are the hardest parts about waiting? How did it feel when the waiting was over?

While reading the story, highlight the feelings and words that Gerald is using. Ask children what emotions Gerald is showing. Ask why Gerald is getting more upset the more he must

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wait. Ask children how Piggie is feeling when Gerald starts complaining and when he gets angry.

While reading the story, ask children what they like to do to help them wait. What do their friends or family do to help them wait? How does your Mom, Dad, or other family members wait?

While reading, highlight the moments when Gerald “groans” and then declares, “I am done waiting!” “I do not think your surprise is worth all this waiting!” Ask children what Gerald could have done instead of shouting and complaining. Ask them how Piggie feels when Gerald reacts this way – especially since Piggie is trying to give Gerald a surprise he needs to wait for.

While reading, highlight the end when Gerald shouts, “We have waited and waited and waited and waited!” just to see he is done waiting and his surprise is here. Talk about how kindly Piggie reacts and how Gerald feels once he sees his surprise waiting in the night sky. Highlight the last exchange when Piggie expresses her excitement over the next morning’s sunrise. Ask your children if they think Gerald was happy that he had waited.

After reading, revisit Gerald’s failed attempts to patiently wait. Reflect on other ways Gerald could have acted or other things Gerald could have said instead. Turn these situations into scenarios for children to act out. Ask children to think of different things they are excited about and have them role-play ways to patiently wait. Talk to children about how patience is part of feeling regulated and what that means. This book ties nicely into self-regulation skills and what being regulated feels like.

## PROMOTING SELF-REGULATION SKILLS

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**Whole Group or Circle Time:** It is important for children to know that waiting is hard for everyone, including adults! During your circle time, talk about how waiting is hard and talk about the hardest things to wait for (e.g. playtime, taking turns with a toy, Mom or Dad to pick you up, seeing Grandma or Grandpa, playing your favorite game, Christmas, Birthdays, getting a surprise, in-line for an activity etc.). Talk about things you can do to help you wait, regulate, and problem-solve when you must wait your turn or for time to pass.

**Art:** Have children create their own night sky like the one Gerald and Piggie see at the end of the book. Have children draw Gerald when he was really tired of waiting and talk about his facial expressions and the way he groaned. Have kids draw a picture of something they are excited about. Talk about why they are excited about it. Take a picture of each student making an excited face and a “waiting is not easy” face. Show the faces to your class and talk about the feelings you see.

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**Games:** Any game that requires some level of waiting could be a good companion for this book. Duck-Duck-Goose, Simon Says, Mother May I, Red Light Green Light, Freeze Dance, Yeti In My Spaghetti are just a few.

**Music:** Songs are a great way for to reinforce patience and self-regulation skills. Some great resources can be found in Anne Meeker's music [here](#) or Greg and Steve songs found [here](#). You can also use [GoNoodle](#) for music and movement to reinforce self-regulation skills.

**Library:** Read other books about waiting and include them in your classroom library. A few great books that cover this topic for children include: *Waiting* by Kevin Henkes, *Are We There Yet?* by Dan Santat, *Remy the Rhino Learns Patience* by Andy McGuire, *Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney, *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss and Crockett Johnson, *Betty Bunny Loves Chocolate Cake* by Micheal Kaplan, and *If You Want to See a Whale* by Julie Fogliano and Erin Stead.

## ENGAGING FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

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Parents and caregivers play an important role in teaching children self-regulation skills, including developing patience. There are some easy activities that parents and caregivers can do at home to teach and talk with children about waiting. If you purchase this book and read it at home, make reference to the book when you or your child is waiting for something. When waiting for the mailman to deliver a package you know is coming, you can take turns walking to watch for the mail truck. When it's not there, simply say aloud, "Waiting is not easy," and talk about Gerald and how he had trouble waiting.

Role play waiting for an activity you know your child is looking forward to. Take turns practicing waiting and talk about things you can do to help pass the time.

Try planting a small plant or flower and talk to your child about how you must wait for it to grow. Watch it each day and discuss how good they are waiting.

Take-home bags can also be made for children to read books and do fun activities related to patience and waiting. Each bag can have a different book and activity for the child to do at home and can be rotated among the children. A list of great books about emotions can be found above.

Just remember the behaviors we want to see in our children must be modeled by us! If you want them to be it, they must see it.

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## USING THE PYRAMID MODEL TO REFLECT

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Self-regulation is a Targeted Social Emotional Strategy in Tier 2 of The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. When Tier 1 strategies are in place and used with fidelity, teachers can make informed decisions about which students can benefit from additional, targeted social emotional supports such as Self and Emotional Regulation. The following can be used to reflect on your classroom practices and identify areas of strength and areas for growth. These were all created by The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations and can be found on their website:

[www.challengingbehavior.org](http://www.challengingbehavior.org).

Resources:

[Social Emotional Implementation Checklist](#)

[Emotions and Emotional Regulation Implementation Guide Checklist](#)

[Teaching Self-Regulation Skills Relaxation-Thermometer](#)

*This Children's Lit Kit was assembled by Amy Carlson, Ed.D., CCC/SLP.*

