

# INFORMATION FOR CAREGIVERS

## FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE



**Low Frustration Tolerance** is when kids believe that the frustration is so unbearable that it must be avoided at all costs. They tend to have poor emotional control, a lack of problem-solving skills, poor communication habits, and poor cognitive abilities.

**High Frustration Tolerance** is when kids are able to accept the reality of frustration and keep their discomfort in perspective.

### RESOURCES

Please visit [essexpediatrics.com/resources/](https://essexpediatrics.com/resources/) for links and additional resources.

- **Article: Low Frustration Tolerance: The #1 Reason Behind The Daily Homework Battles**

<https://parentingthemodernfamily.com/low-frustration-tolerance-1-reason-behind-daily-homework-battles/>

- **Video: Naming emotions and other skills**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5U141vEr78>

- **Book: Zack gets Frustrated**

<https://www.amazon.com/Zach-Gets-Frustrated-Rules/dp/1575423901>

### REACTIONS DUE TO LOW FRUSTRATION TOLERANCE

- **Negativity and complaining.** Kids become distressed over small setbacks, unfairness, and make comparisons between siblings/friends
- **Extreme emotions.** Impulsive and extreme emotions such as anger, depression, anxiety, and helplessness result when kids (irrationally) believe that they should get what they want
- **Preference of short-range enjoyment** over long-term rewards. Kids commonly prefer immediate pleasure or avoidance of pain, at the cost of long-term stress
- **Closed mindedness.** Kids may get so caught up that it becomes difficult to reason with them.

### STRATEGIES

- **Exposure.** Allow your child to experience frustration, without your help. If they can sit and do homework for 15 mins without a break, then challenge them to work for 20 mins for one week and increase by 5 mins each week
- **Setting rules and consequences.** It is important to learn that throwing tantrums won't get them what they want. Set expectations for rewards as well. Be clear about consequences, and avoid power struggles.
- **Consistency.** It is essential that both parents give the same message to the child. Kids should hold up their end of the bargain to earn rewards. Parents must not lessen the expectation just because the child is noisy in his disappointment.
- **Identify triggers.** Some triggers can be when work gets hard, distractions, lack of sleep, hunger, lack of confidence
- **Identify negative thoughts.** Challenge them to tell you 2-3 things that they are thinking when they are frustrated.
- **Model coping skills.** Verbalize your feelings and express what you need, say "I am so frustrated right now, I need a break."
- **Celebrate small victories.**