

# Helping Children Learn Patience & Empathy

## Why Children May Act Selfishly

- Want things right away
- Are still developing empathy and perspective-taking
  - Feel tired, hungry, stressed, or overwhelmed
  - Have difficulty waiting, sharing, or taking turns
- Do not yet have the language to express their needs

## What Children Are Learning

- Managing strong emotions and impulses
- Delaying gratification and tolerating frustration
  - Sharing and taking turns
- Understanding how their actions affect others
- Balancing personal needs with group expectations

## How We Can Help

- Model calm waiting and respectful language
- Set expectations and enforce them consistently
  - Make children wait on purpose
- Do not rush to fix frustration or give in to demands
  - Give choices but keep firm limits
  - Praise effort, not entitlement
- Do not reward demanding or impatient behavior
- Acknowledge effort when children wait or compromise