

Staying With a Task: Ages 4-5

Working on tasks that take longer than five minutes gives your child the opportunity to:

- Learn patience and persistence
- Discover her strengths and weaknesses in activities
- Regulate her emotions during challenging tasks

Ideas to try with your child:

- Provide your child with a variety of tasks around the house that take time, such as puzzles with various numbers and pieces; looking at or listening to a book; building with blocks, sofa cushions or Legos; kicking, hitting, or throwing a ball; beading with Cheerios onto a straw, pipe cleaner, or yarn; and arts and craft projects.
- Create a chart listing “Things I Like to Do” and “Things I Prefer Not to Do.” Have your child choose at least one activity from each list to do that day. It is important for your child to stay with activities that are challenging, but you should also acknowledge things he likes to do or does not like to do.

If your child is struggling:

- If the child seems uninterested in the activity, set a timer for 2 minutes and let them move on after it’s done. Next time, set the timer for 3 minutes, and so on.
- Create opportunities for your child to be successful: give them a 3-4 piece puzzle and say, “Wow, you did that puzzle so fast!” With a more challenging puzzle remind them how they did the other one.

Going further:

- You can have the child work longer periods of time on one activity or add more steps to one. For example, have them write their name, cut around it, and glue on a piece of paper.

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 4-5** that parents can help improve at home.



Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*, “Stay with a task for more than five minutes and attempt to solve problems that arise.” About Me and My Family and Culture, Ages 4-5, pg. 72