

Essential Eight Skills: Tolerating situations related to health and safety

Why is tolerating situations related to health and safety important?

In life we all have to do things we do not want to do. Most of these things tend to be to do with keeping us healthy and safe. Many of the things we once did not like doing, we do not even think about any more. But for a young person who does not understand why they have to do something, it can be really hard to tolerate.

It is important that we support children to be able to deal with potentially stressful situations to avoid long-term difficulties. The more we can communicate the reason behind why we are doing what we are doing as their understanding develops, the more tolerable it will be.

What does it look like in daily life?

- Wearing a seat belt
- Wearing clothes
- Going to the dentist
- Eating vegetables



Essential Eight Skills:

1. Making a request
2. Waiting
3. Accepting removals/transitions/sharing/turn taking
4. Completing tasks when requested
5. Accepting 'no'
6. Following directions related to health & safety
7. Completing daily living skills related to health & safety
8. Tolerating situations related to health & safety

Armstrong, H., Denne, L. D., & Bailey, T. (2021). The role of key skills as a risk marker for the development of challenging behaviour in children and young people who have an intellectual disability. *International Journal of Positive Behavioural Support*, 11(2), 3-14.

How to learn and practise

- Use role modelling, for example, get into the back of the car with your child and put your seatbelt on so they can see how it works
- Integrate singing and bright exaggerated emotions and actions to make the situation a happy one
- Make a game out of the situation, for example, in preparation for going to the dentist let your child look in your mouth and then say 'Mummy's turn' and get them to open their mouth for you to look
- If your child is able to engage with social stories and visual symbols, these can also help to give clear messages

How to support learning

- Keep language simple
- Use key phrases highlighting what they are doing well
- Use lots of praise so they associate the skill with positivity, e.g. 'well done' or 'good listening'
- Gradually increase the exposure to the situations, e.g. sitting a car seat in the living room, then playing with it, then sitting in it in the living room, then moving it to the car etc.

Please visit our website for videos explaining in more detail how to practise these and other essential skills

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<https://www.camhsnorthderbyshire.nhs.uk/>

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