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LIGHTHOUSE

Information & Support

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CHALLENGES OF PARENTHOOD

May is a time when spring is in full bloom, the sun is warming ever more strongly, and by the end of the month, social media will be full of pictures of happy children giving their mums presents to celebrate their day. Every now and then on the internet you come across images of the perfect family, wonderful moments together, smiles, fun with the children... and the difficulties of parenthood are hidden. Do not be fooled by idealistic visions, we all have difficult moments and doubts. So how to be a good parent and not go crazy?

Every child is different

In 1956, psychiatrists Alexander Thomas and Stella Chess initiated a study on 133 infants whom they followed for the next 25 years. This enabled them to identify three types of child temperament:

- **Easy** – characteristic of a child with predominant positive mood, quickly adapting and curious about new stimuli.
- **Slow to warm up** – here the negative mood outweighs the positive, the child has difficulty adapting, does not respond very well to new stimuli.
- **Difficult** – it is similar to the above, but is distinguished by the child's significant strength of response to stimuli and the lack of regularity of biological functions (it is difficult to establish a daily pattern of feeding, excretion and sleeping times).

As you might guess, children with a difficult temperament are more likely than others to struggle with anxiety, outbursts of anger, stuttering or disrupted sleep patterns. However, this does not mean that such toddlers are doomed to family, school and social problems in adulthood. Temperament is the basis, but environment also plays a big role in personality formation. This is particularly evident among pairs of monozygotic twins who have different personality traits and, for example, participate in different extracurricular activities and have different acquaintances and friends.

There are no „bad” or „good” temperaments, but they require a different approach to the child and a different way of parenting that will support the child's mental development. This is one of the reasons why parenting is such a difficult and demanding task. How not to go crazy? How to have patience with your own children and build a valuable relationship based on security and trust?



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For parents, we recommend a blog by a great educator and mother of two, where you can find tips on building an empathetic and constructive relationship with your children. It is sound knowledge shared in a friendly manner, and to read it, you just need to click [here](#).

HOW TO BE PATIENT?

Children constantly learn something, get to know themselves and other people, explore the world. They have to assimilate what is right and what is wrong – this takes time. They explore boundaries, i.e. what they are allowed to do and what they are not, and then desirable and difficult behaviours emerge. Being a parent is about helping a young person to distinguish them and cope with them. Patience plays a significant role here:

1. Instead of being angry and punitive (which is not very effective by the way), patiently describe your feelings, for example: „It makes me angry when you talk to me like that. I feel impatient when you’ve been saying for two days that you will clean up your room and you’re not doing it”. Children, seeing our patience, learn it themselves.
2. Children have a limited ability to cope with their own emotions. Your patience allows you to accept your child's emotions, they can express them and you can help name them: „I can see that you are angry because your sister took your toy. You don't have to beat her though, try to ask her to give it back to you”.

WHEN PATIENCE IS ABOUT TO END

Sometimes everyone struggles with a lack of patience, it is worth knowing how to recharge your batteries:

- Start by taking care of yourself! It is extremely important to rest, sleep, get rid of tension. And also the difficult art of letting go.
- Try to understand developmental regularities. Being aware of changes in behaviour and the reasons for them – what is natural and age-related – is very helpful.
- Be patient with yourself. Everyone loses their temper and explodes at times, and this does not at all mean that you are a bad parent. Try to understand why it happened. Perhaps you feel tired? Or hungry? Look again at the first point in this list.
- External factors also play an important role: a burnt pot, a nosy neighbour who doesn't seem to be leaving your flat any time soon... Such situations also make you lose your patience for a while.
- Think about how your child tries to be patient. For example, when you promised to talk about their possible birthday party. See how long they manage to wait patiently!

Recall how many times you have managed to be patient with your child. You see? You can do it! And the child is not doing all this maliciously. They are just learning the world, so try to help them understand it. And remember about yourself too – you are also important!

*Don't wait, call now! If you feel you need help rebuilding your patience, contact a specialist.
We are here to support you!*