Delayed gratification is the ability to resist the temptation for an immediate reward and wait for a later reward. Many studies have been done to observe this life skill of self control. The “Marshmallow Test” was conducted by Walter Mischel of Columbia University. Children were given the choice of one marshmallow now or two marshmallows later; some children could wait but some could not. Mischel noticed that the children who waited for the two marshmallows were better at distracting themselves from the marshmallows. Mischel then followed these children into adulthood and he found that the children who waited for the two marshmallows did better in school and were able to pursue academic and personal goals with less frustration and distraction. Through this research they found that if they helped the children focus on something else, their ability to wait for the two marshmallows increased. They concluded that delayed gratification can be taught.

Some of the activities we use during Play and Learn to help your child develop their delayed gratification skills are listed below. Please ask for tips on how to best use them with your child.

Table Activities

- Headband/Pillow Activity: Children are to stretch the headband around the pillow and then ring the bell. As they develop their skills they can put several headbands on the pillow before ringing the bell.
- Bottles/Bands Activity: Same as above but using bottles and ponytail holders.
- Jewels Game: Children role the dice and put that number of jewels on the board to reach the crown. Any board game that a child has to wait to get to the end of the board or to win the game would also increase delayed gratification, fine motor skills, and math skills.
- Puzzles: Working single piece puzzles and progressing to larger puzzles with smaller pieces can help a child practice delayed gratification skills

Songs: children have to wait for something in these songs

- Dinosaur, Dinosaur
- Naughty Pussycat
- Two Little Blackbirds
- Sticky Bubble Gum