

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Momo always wants to be first

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CALMING AND SELF-REGULATION TECHNIQUES
FOR CHILDREN + TIPS FOR ADULTS



Dr. Eva Brlek, Prof. of Rehab. & Psychotherapist

Eva Brlek is a professional in educational rehabilitation and psychotherapist. Following her dreams, she opened a private practice, Kabinet Nueva, where she can enable the maximum stimulation and realization of the potential, abilities, and possibilities of both children and adults. With an interdisciplinary approach and innovative therapeutic methods, she provides diagnostic, counseling, and therapy services in educational rehabilitation, psychology, and psychotherapy. Eva is mostly fulfilled in her role of a mother to a wonderful boy, with whom she grows and develops to her fullest possible extent.



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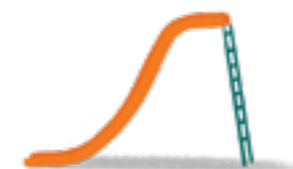
Julija Kukec has a master's degree in psychology, she is a practitioner of reality therapy and an ECHA specialist for education of the gifted. She is a professional assistant in a kindergarten, working with children to monitor their development and identify difficulties and potential giftedness. She also provides educational programs through lectures and workshops, diagnosis, and support for children and parents in the form of counseling. She is the mother of two children, who are her biggest and most important inspiration in every area of her work. In her free time, Julija enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband and children.

Eva Brlek and Julija Kukec

Momo always wants to be first

Impatience as the background of challenging behaviors

Illustrations:
Sven Nemet



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Adults often encounter with child's behaviors they don't know how to deal with, react to, solve, and what to do. That is why experts often describe them as **challenging behaviors**.

These are unacceptable behaviors because their intensity, frequency, or duration can endanger the physical safety of the child or others and interfere or pose a risk to the child's optimal learning or inclusion in social interactions with peers and adults.

One such challenging behavior is shown in the following story. We will see how challenging behavior in a child can be triggered by **impatience**.



At the playground, Momo was very impatient while waiting for his turn to go down the slide. In his nervousness, he began to push others and forced his way to be the first in line. By behaving like this, he violated the safety of other animals, potentially his own safety, and their friendships and he deprived himself of learning through play and fun.

But Momo, just like all children who show similar challenging behaviors, chooses such behaviors because they haven't learned better and more efficient ways of **dealing with frustration**. We cannot simply label such children as naughty or poorly raised. At the core of every challenging behaviour are a child's unsatisfied needs, a bad self-image, and low self-confidence. Sometimes, behavior can be a reaction to traumatic experiences. Behind every child's behavior, there is a specific reason that adults often do not recognize when looking from their perspective.

For a child to learn how to choose better and more efficient behaviors, it is necessary to adopt the ability to self-regulate. Self-regulation is an adaptation process, and it includes a child's ability to face challenges and stresses.

Self-regulation includes **managing emotional reactions, thinking about what triggered the emotions, choosing an appropriate reaction, and the child's ability to satisfy their own individual desires and needs**.

When we help a child to learn self-regulation, we are building better and less stressful relationships with them, and we will also help them have more positive relationships with peers. That means more self-esteem, self-confidence, empathy, better socio-emotional competencies, and better overall mental health.

Find out how Momo succeeded to self-regulate in the story that follows.



That sunny morning, the playground was full of animals who, accompanied by their parents and grandparents, had come to enjoy the fresh air.

A little panda called Momo was there too. He swung on the swing for a short while, and then ran towards his favorite slide. He was looking forward to a quick slide, but when he got closer, he saw a long line in front of the ladder leading to the top of the slide. In front of him were a lot of animals. They all wanted to go down the slide too.



Momo realized that he would have to wait a very long time to go down the slide. He didn't like that at all and became impatient and restless. Then he felt his paws began to sweat. He was squeezing his paws; he was getting very hot. And then the heat began to rise from his paws, through his body, all the way to his head. He blushed all over and looked like steam was about to burst out of his ears.

Momo could only think about how to get to the top of the slide as soon as possible. He couldn't wait any longer. He pushed the kitty standing in front of him. Then he jumped onto the shell of a turtle that was standing in front of the kitty. He pushed and jumped over all the animals that were patiently waiting for their turn. The animals protested, called their mums, and complained about Momo's rude behavior.

When Momo finally made it to the top of the slide, he went down at a high speed. He enjoyed the slide and was the happiest panda in the world.



When his feet touched the ground, he immediately rushed for another slide. But then he saw his mom approaching and saying loudly: – Momo, stop! We need to talk.

Mom gently took his hand and led him to a nearby bench.

– Momo, I know that you really like going down the slide. That’s okay, but the way you rushed past the line, pushing others and jumping on them, that’s not okay. That kind of behavior is not good, because you hurt others – mom said in a serious voice, but calmly, looking Momo in the eyes.

Momo felt the heat in his body again and began to shout in a tearful voice:
– But Mom, I have to be first! It’s my slide, and they all want to go on it right now.

