

Culture Affects Kids' Ability to Delay Gratification

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Overcoming impulses to enjoy immediate rewards in order to get later benefits is fundamental to achieving goals. Researchers often measure the delaying of gratification with well-known “[marshmallow task](#),” in which children must resist the urge to eat one treat now in order to get more treats later.

[Individual differences](#) in this task predict important later life outcomes such as academic success, socioemotional competence, and health, many researchers agree.

As reported in the journal *[Psychological Science](#)*, researchers found that cultural habits around waiting to eat (emphasized in Japan) and waiting to open gifts (emphasized in the United States) shape distinct profiles of delaying gratification.

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