

-게 하다

make or let someone do

The general causative. One form covers both making and allowing, and only context tells you which — English needs two different verbs here.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Any verb	-게 하다	먹다 → 먹게 하다
ㄹ stems keep the ㄹ	-게 하다	만들다 → 만들게 했어요
The person	을/를 or 에게/한테	아이를 자게 했어요
Preventing	못 -게 하다	못 가게 했어요
Letting, politely	-게 해 주다	쉬게 해 주세요
Lexical causatives	먹이다, 앉히다, 재우다	아이에게 밥을 먹였어요

WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -게 하다 to any verb stem — no vowel rule, ㄹ stays, tense on 하다. The person being caused to act takes 을/를, or 에게/한테 when the verb already has an object.

Whether it means make or let depends entirely on the situation: 아이를 자게 했어요 could be putting a child to bed or letting them sleep in. Korean does not force the distinction, and neither should your translation.

Many common verbs also have a dedicated causative form built into the vocabulary: 먹다 → 먹이다, 앉다 → 앉히다, 자다 → 재우다. Where such a verb exists, it usually implies more direct physical involvement.

The negative version, 못 -게 하다, means preventing. And -도록 하다 is the softer cousin used for instructions.

IN USE

- 1 아이를 일찍 자게 했어요.
I put the child to bed early.
- 2 선생님이 학생들에게 발표를 하게 하셨어요.
The teacher had the students give presentations.
- 3 동생을 좀 쉬게 해 주세요.
Please let my brother rest a while.
- 4 그 이야기가 저를 웃게 했어요.
That story made me laugh.
- 5 아이들에게 직접 만들게 했어요.
I had the children make it themselves.

6 기다리게 해서 죄송합니다.

I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.

COMPARED WITH

시키다

시키다 also means making someone do something, but it takes a noun rather than a verb, and always means ordering rather than allowing.

공부하게 했어요. (made or let them study) / 공부를 시켰어요. (made them study)

-도록 하다

-게 하다 reports what you did to someone; -도록 하다 asks the listener to see to something. The second is an instruction, not a report.

일찍 오게 했어요. (I made them come early) / 일찍 오도록 하세요. (please come early)

-게 되다

하다 puts an agent in charge; 되다 removes one. The pair is worth learning together.

가게 했어요. (I made them go) / 가게 됐어요. (it turned out I'm going)

WATCH OUT

X 아이가 일찍 자게 했어요.

O 아이를 일찍 자게 했어요.

The person being caused to act is the object of 하다, so they take 을/를 rather than 이/가.

X 선생님이 발표를 하게 시켰어요.

O 선생님이 발표를 시켰어요.

시키다 already contains the causative meaning and takes a noun. Combining it with -게 하다 doubles the construction.

X 저녁을 만들게 됐어요. — meaning "I had her make dinner"

O 저녁을 만들게 했어요.

되다 means the situation came about on its own. To say you caused it, the verb is 하다.