



Ten Tips for Managing Temper Tantrums

Temper tantrums are NORMAL and common during the toddler years. Children tantrum when they are frustrated and overloaded. The push/pull feelings of wanting to grow up but wanting to be close to you can lead to episodes of overload. So can being sick, hungry or tired. The toddler can fall apart when faced with obstacles to his or her desires or can simply fall apart because it all gets to be too much. There are many things that parents can do to deal with their child's temper tantrums and minimize their impact on both parent and child.

Read on for tips on managing your child's tantrums.

1. Remember, Tantrums are Normal

They typically appear at around 15 months of age and can vary in intensity, duration and longevity, depending on your child's temperament.

2. Prevention is the Key

Anticipate when your child may get overloaded and tantrum. Help your child by changing your behavior. Is your child too tired or hungry to go to the store with you? Are transitions hard for your child? Is that forbidden object still within your child's sight and reach?

3. Stop the Tantrum Before it Starts

Distracting your child with an appealing object or some nurturing attention may stop the tantrum before it starts. Draw your child's attention away from a situation that may spark a tantrum.

4. Give Choices

You can diffuse a tense situation by offering your child choices. If your child can't play with the phone, can you offer a toy instead? If it is bedtime, can your child choose what books to bring to bed? Choices give some control back to your child, but your rules can still stand firm.

5. Pick Your Battles

Your limit setting will be most effective and your child will be less confused and overwhelmed if you have only a few, simple rules to follow. What are the most important rules for your child's well being? What limits are necessary to keep your child safe?

6. If a Tantrum Happens, Let Your Child Work It Out

Your role is to keep your child safe during a tantrum, not to stop it. Your child needs to work through the inner turmoil. You may have to hold your child gently, take him or her to a safe place to cry it out or just wait for your child to be finished.

7. Be Ready with a Hug

Your child needs to be reassured of your love after a tantrum. Words and gestures of affection are important.

8. Do Not Give in to Your Child's Demands

Letting your child have what he or she wants to stop a tantrum will only send a message to your child that tantrums get you what you want.

9. Check in with Yourself

Never react to your child in anger or frustration. Tantrums can be very hard to manage. You may need a time out for yourself before you respond to your child.

10. Ask for Help

Your Pediatric Team is available to help. There are a lot of resources available to assist you in managing your child's challenging behavior.

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