
Ideas for Parents



Who most commonly has them?

- Mostly young children, but occasionally older children have them too.

What does a temper tantrum look like?

- Screaming
- Crying
- Throwing things
- Running off
- Throwing oneself on the ground
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Biting
- Refusal to move

How do individual personalities play into temper tantrums?

- Can affect the intensity of the tantrum.
- Can affect the frequency of the tantrums.
- Can influence how long the tantrum lasts.

Why do Children Have Tantrums?

- Because they're supposed to.
- To release frustration.
- To release powerful feelings, which ultimately help them settle.
- Because they're tired.
- Because they're hungry.
- Because they're over stimulated.
- Because they're frustrated due to lack of skills (i.e. lack the words, cognitive ability or fine or gross motor ability).

How should we deal with tantrums?

- As parents or child care providers, one of our goals should be teaching a child to deal with anger. Learning takes time and practice.
- Try to remember once a tantrum starts, rarely can they stop it.
- You can almost never go wrong by ignoring a tantrum (move them to a safe place if you have to).
- Never give into a tantrum.
- Remember as they mature and have practice, the tantrums will decrease.
- Don't let an audience affect how you deal with a tantrum.

Prevention is often the best way to help avoid tantrums

- Teach them healthy ways to release anger, (i.e. exercise, scribbling, "draw a picture of your mad").
- Help your child find the words to tell you why they're mad.
- Don't skip naps.
- Make nap times and bedtimes consistent.
- Carry snacks (nothing worse than a hungry toddler).
- Don't say "maybe" to avoid a fight, maybe says "yes" to a toddler and only postpones the fight.
- Reduce the need to say no, by childproofing your home.
- Say "yes" when you can.
- Stay calm and ignore the tantrum until it passes.
- Some tantrums occur because children can't adjust to our pace. For warn them of changes (i.e. "we have to go after this cartoon").
- When children tantrum from being distressed, comfort them if they'll allow it.
- Don't push your luck (i.e. dragging them to 6 stores when they've shown signs they've had enough at the fourth).
- Say sorry if you've been "a twit". When children see adults say sorry, it is teaching them it is normal to make mistakes and apologize.
- Offer a compromise if they raise a valid point.
- Never yell at, hit or spank a tantrumming child, it will only escalate their behaviour.
- Recognize that sometimes it is you that needs to calm down after a tantrum. The incident might be over for the child but you're still steaming. Calm yourself down and don't brood, you may reactivate a tantrum.

Enjoy all of their ages and stages, as before you know it, they'll be distant memories.

