

How to support your child when frustrated

What is challenging behavior?

Challenging behavior is also known as a tantrum, meltdown, outburst or rage. It is a form of communication when words are not used to express anxiety or frustration.

There are three stages:

1. **Rumbling.** Your child may make loud or intense voice sounds. Your child might also: flap their hands, rock, jump, tap their feet, pace, hum, repeat words, phrases and sounds. In some cases, children may use these same movements/actions to self-soothe. This is their way to cope and prevent an outburst.
2. **Rage.** Your child may scream, bite, hit, kick or run off.
3. **Recovery.** A child may show that they are sorry by:
 - a. Going to sleep.
 - b. Stopping the rage behavior.
 - c. Using their voice to say, "I am sorry."



How can I support my child?

- Help your child to have a sense of control.
- When giving children praise, be specific. Give an example of the positive behavior. For example, "I really like the way you are grunting instead of hitting."
- Children respond positively to structure. This is true even in stressful environments.

How can I support my child during a tantrum?

- Remember that an escalated parent cannot calm an escalated child.
- Safety first. Keep yourself and your child safe.
- Stay calm. Take a deep breath. Create a quiet environment.
- Do not try to discipline your child during a tantrum.
- After the tantrum, let your child rest and take a break.

Where can I get help?

CHW Family Resource Center (414) 266-8432. They can help with questions and community resources.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.