

Some Way to Prevent Tantrums

Routine. Whenever possible, establish consistent times for meals, naps and bedtimes. Children are happiest and most cooperative when they know what to expect.

Choices. Offer your child opportunities to choose: "Before bed, we can read a story or sing a song together."

Realistic Expectations. Learn as much as you can about your child's development. For example, most 18 month olds are not yet ready to share a special toy. Not all two year olds are developmentally ready to be toilet trained.

Timing. Whenever possible, plan shopping trips and activities at times when you and your children are up to the task.

Environment. Some children lose control when they are in a busy, unfamiliar or noisy place. Whenever possible, avoid over stimulation and protect your children from sensory overload.



Tantrums too shall pass!
Children in the midst of a "melt down" respond much better to kindness and understanding than anger (just like a stressed-out adult!)

For Assistance and Information
Call Our

**PARENT HELPLINE
(414) 671-0566**

www.theparentingnetwork.org

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Artwork by Michael Owen Design (and his son, Brandon)



TAMING TEMPER TANTRUMS



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What is a Temper Tantrum?

A temper tantrum is an outburst of uncontrollable behavior that happens when a child is tired, hungry, over-stimulated or angry about not getting what he wants.

During a tantrum, your child is actually losing control and is not able to make reasonable choices or to comply. (Tantrums commonly occur between the ages of 18 months and four years.) Parents' angry reactions or "giving in" may contribute to temper tantrums especially beyond the age of four.

Common tantrum displays include:

- Kicking, hitting
- Screaming, crying
- Flailing
- Throwing toys/other items
- Breath holding

Sometimes parents see tantrums as manipulative or defiant behavior on the part of the child. A child does not "plan" to have a temper tantrum. **Do not punish your child for having a temper tantrum.**



Why Does my Child have Tantrums?

Children have strong feelings, wishes and needs. Many young children cannot yet fully express themselves with language. Tantrums are their way of expressing "big feelings."

Tantrums are often a release of pent up frustration.

Tantrums can occur when a child cannot master a task. A child's developmental level often limits her.



She is asserting herself. She wants you to know that she is important and that what she wants matters.

She wants control over her life. When a child feels that adults have the final say in every matter, she becomes frustrated. A tantrum is her way of resisting control.



Parenting During a Temper Tantrum

Stay calm. Your anger or frustration "adds fuel" to the tantrum. The fastest way to get your child to calm down is for you to remain calm during "the storm."

If your child is not hurting himself or others and not destroying things, you may want to ignore the tantrum. If ignoring doesn't work and you are in a public place, you may need to go home (Don't leave a child unattended during a tantrum.)

Understanding and acceptance. As the tantrum subsides, regain closeness. "You had a big feeling, didn't you? Sometimes big feelings are scary. You can use words to talk about how you feel."