

Temper Tantrums: A Normal Part of Toddlerhood

Temper tantrums are normal in the life of a toddler. Temper expresses anger and tantrum releases frustration. Tantrums are dramatic fits and upsetting for those nearby. Yet, the tantrum let's your child release powerful feelings and settle down.

Reasons why children have tantrums may vary. Toddlers are working hard to have the world understand them and they can get VERY UPSET when they don't get what they want or feel they need. How often and how strong tantrums happen is affected by personality.

Tantrums occur most often with tired or hungry children. Using a loud voice or threatening punishment may actually cause tantrums to worsen. A good plan is to prevent tantrums when possible. Offering choices often helps your child stay calm.

The goal for parents is to teach their child about dealing with anger. Learning takes time and practice. Try hard to remember that toddlers can rarely stop their fit. You can almost never go wrong to ignore the tantrum and it is best to NEVER give into a tantrum. Remember, as your toddler matures tantrums occur less often.

Pointers for Parents:

- ✓ Teach your child harmless ways to handle his/her anger such as: punching a pillow, scribbling to "draw a picture of your mad", or running outside really fast.
- ✓ Help your child learn to use words to tell you why s/he is angry.
- ✓ Don't skip naps. Plan trips away from home around naps and make bedtime the same time every night.
- ✓ Hungry toddlers can ROAR! Carry nutritious snacks when you go out. Offer them before behavior gets out of hand.
- ✓ Don't say, "maybe" to avoid a fight. Maybe means yes to a toddler and just postpones a fight.
- ✓ Reduce the need to say, "No!" by child-proofing your home and setting few, but necessary rules.
- ✓ Say "yes" when you can. Saying yes at the beginning makes it easier to gain cooperation and is better than giving in later. Example: "Yes, it would be fun to have ice cream for breakfast! Today we're having toast or cereal with banana."
- ✓ Stay calm and ignore the fit until it passes.