



Helping you control those terrible tantrums

Stomp out the Tantrum

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Things to know:

- Tantrums are a child's way of expressing their emotions
- Ignoring the tantrum is key!
- Talk to the child about how they felt after the child has had a tantrum
- Establish coping skills with your child for when they get frustrated

Handling those Terrible Tantrums

Temper tantrums can be described as a parents nightmare. There is nothing worse than being out at the store when you child throws themselves on the floor and starts having a tantrum. Your instinct is always to give into the child's tantrum and give them what they want. This instinct is wrong! Giving into your child's tantrum can show the child that all they have to do is tantrum and they get what they want.

So what should you do when you child does have a tantrum? Here are some tips:

1. **IGNORE:** the first thing you should try is ignoring. Sometimes children have tantrums to get attention. Leave the room, turn on the TV, whatever you do, do not

Terrible Tantrums

You're getting dinner ready and your child asks if they can have a cookie before dinner. You tell them no because it is going to ruin their appetite. Next thing you know your child is on the floor crying, flailing their legs, and banging the floor.

The above situation is an example of a tantrum that a child can have at almost any time and on average lasts for about 3 minutes. Tantrums can include crying, holding their breath, head banging, throwing things, screaming, being aggressive, destroying property, name calling, cursing, stomping, kicking, dropping to the floor, hitting, and running away.

talk to them or give the tantrum attention. The only time you should intervene is when the child is harming themselves, others, or property.

2. **Know the triggers:** If you know that a certain thing is going to trigger a tantrum, try and avoid them. You are setting your child up to have a tantrum when you make your child engage in the trigger. If you absolutely have to engage in the trigger, prepare your child and let them know there will be consequences.

3. **NEVER give in:** As stated before giving

Many of these behaviors are done to get attention from the parents. In fact, tantrums have been described as the most common behavioral problem in children.

Tantrums are usually a child's way of expressing their emotions. They are typical for children between the ages of 18 months and 4 years old. Children do not have the coping mechanisms yet to communicate to their par-

ents/guardians what they want. Tantrums after these years are not typical for children and need to be stopped by parents.

Parents become very frustrated with tantrums and they are not an acceptable

way for your child to communicate their feelings. In this issue you will learn how to handle those tantrums and how to teach your child coping mechanisms. Say good-bye to those terrible tantrums!



Tantrums can occur anywhere. You just need to know how to handle them.

into the tantrum only reinforces the behavior.

4. **Timeouts;** If your child continues to have tantrums enforce timeouts. The tantrum needs to be associated with a negative consequence. Timeouts should take place in a room where there are no positive reinforcements (toys, TV, etc.) and should last for 1 minute per year of the child's age (i.e. 6 minutes for a 6-year-old).

These tips should help you in taming your child's tantrums. If the tantrums continue it may be time to seek some professional help.

Teaching your child coping skills

Coping skills are things that your child can do to calm themselves down. It is important for your child to learn how to calm themselves down when they feel frustrated or upset that they are not getting something that they want. Children over the age of 4 should be able to calm themselves down, but sometimes they may need some help learning how to do it.

There are three important rules coping skills.

1. Cannot hurt themselves

2. Cannot hurt others

3. Cannot hurt property

These three rules can be used when talking about coping skills with your child. Some examples of coping skills are coloring, drawing, listening to music, exercising, playing a game, going for a walk, counting to 10, taking deep breaths, and talking to an adult. These coping skills help the child get their mind of the thing that is frustrating them.



Suggested Readings

- * **The Chocolate Covered Tantrum by Deborah Blumenthal:** This book goes through a child having a tantrum over a cookie, while the mother just stands there and watches her having the tantrum not giving into the tantrum. It provides a good example of how a parent should react to a child having a tantrum. (3-6 year olds)
- * **Sometimes I'm Bombaloo by Rachel Vail:** This book describes how a child feels and acts when her baby brother wrecks something that she is building. It talks about the feelings that the child may be experiencing and how the tantrum is resolved. (4-8 year olds)
- * **Feelings to Share from A to Z by Todd Snow:** This book has a feeling for each letter of the alphabet. It gives the child examples of those feelings and the words they need to communicate their feelings appropriately.
- * **No More Meltdowns: Positive Strategies for Managing and Controlling Out-of-control behaviors by Jed Baker:** This book offers a four step program that will help you improve your relationship with your child and help to control your child's out-of-control behaviors.



Giving

into your child's
tantrums only rein-
forces the behav-
ior!

Reinforcing positive behaviors
shows the child that they do not
have to tantrum to get what they
want. Give them a treat when they
have a day without a tantrum!



Useful Websites

Temper Tantrums: Guidelines for Parents:

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/behavior/tantrums_ho.aspx

This website provide parents with characteristics of temper tantrums, prevention tips, intervention tips, and other resources that may be helpful.

Understanding children: Temper Tantrums

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/PM1529J.pdf>

This publication from Iowa State University provides parents with information on what is developmentally normal for a child, how to handle a tantrum, and provides parents with a worksheet to prepare a plan of action for when tantrums occur.

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