

Tips for Taming Tantrums

If you have a toddler, you have probably had to deal with a temper tantrum every now and again. While tantrums are normal, they can be one of the most challenging aspects of parenting a young child. Below are some tips for dealing with challenging behaviors without losing your cool.

- When a child has a tantrum, he is trying a different way of expressing himself. Tantrums may happen when a child is frightened, frustrated, angry, tired or sick and he is unable to easily express his feelings or needs.
- To decrease tantrums, avoid having your child do difficult or stressful activities when she is tired, hungry or not feeling well. Don't over-plan your toddler's day. Try to focus on what is important and reduce as many hassles as possible.
- Quiet time each day helps children maintain emotional balance.
- Encourage your child to talk about how he is feeling. Help him use words to express himself. Acknowledge his feelings and accept them without judging them or trying to change them.
- Give your child your full attention. Help him to learn self-control and cooperation.
- If your child has a tantrum, take her to a quiet place to calm down. Do not embarrass or scold her in front of others. Stay with her and help to calm her.
- Later, when the child is calm, discuss what happened and use it as a teaching opportunity. Teach the child new skills that will help her to be successful.
- Don't yell, punish or spank children for having tantrums. Keep your cool. Tantrums are normal and will diminish over time as a child grows.
- It is normal for children to test limits. Set age-appropriate rules for your household and stick to them. Be clear and consistent about the rules. Be loving but firm.
- It is sometimes okay to ignore behaviors like crying and screaming for attention, slamming doors, sticking out tongue, and kicking the floor. Do not ignore it when a child tries to hurt himself or someone else, throws or damages things.

These tips were compiled from a variety of sources. For more tip sheets, visit www.fraser.org.