



HOW TO HANDLE TEMPER TANTRUMS

Temper tantrums are perhaps one of the most exasperating problem behaviors for parents and caregivers to deal with. Here are some suggestions on how to deal with temper tantrums.

Remember that:

1. The way that you handle a temper tantrum is important: stay calm, show understanding and patience, but be firm and consistent.
2. Tantrums are a sign of frustration and anger.
3. Children under three need help working their way out of a tantrum through patience and understanding.
4. Older children usually try to use a tantrum to get what they want. They need to know that there are other ways to have their needs met and their desires fulfilled.

Suggestions on how to handle temper tantrums:

1. Temper tantrums often come from the child's inability to control things around him or to do the things that he wants to do. During those times, the child needs to know that you love and understand him- "I know you're angry, you want a cookie and you can't have it."
2. Temper tantrums are quite common among children under three years old. These children are totally out of control and need an adult to be there and take charge. Usually picking up the child and holding or rocking her helps the tantrum subside.
3. When you see frustration building in a child, use redirection to distract him from the problem- suggest a new activity, snack, walk, etc. to divert his attention from the situation.



4. When a child has a tantrum in a public place- keep your cool. Calmly and quickly finish what you have to do and go home without admonishing the child in public. You are not alone. Every parent has been through a public temper tantrum.

5. When an older child (over three) uses tantrums as a form of control, ignore them. Don't give the child what she wants or show that the tantrum upsets you. Tell her "when you're finished and can use a normal voice, we will talk about the situation." The

rules for a child do not change just because he is upset and throwing a tantrum.

6. If ignoring the wailing child is difficult for you to do, then give the child a place, such as a bedroom or another room in the house, where it's okay to be angry. You want to convey to the child that while anger is normal and can be expressed in appropriate places and ways, a temper tantrum is not acceptable.
7. If confining the child is also difficult, confine YOURSELF. Quietly walk into your bedroom or bathroom and say "I'll come out when you are finished." The child will usually sit right by the door, hopefully calming down, until you reappear!
8. Teach the child to express his anger and frustration in an acceptable way. Explain to him that talking is better than angry actions that could hurt others. "Use words to tell me what you want." Some children like to talk things out- others like to be left alone to "cool down." Both ways are normal and okay.