

Coping With a Temper Tantrum

What Causes a Tantrum?

Children 18 months to 4 years old are prone to having tantrums. Tantrums often happen when a child is tired, hungry, over stimulated, or ignored. Sometimes children have tantrums to test limits or to get their own way.

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Solutions to Tantrums:

- Stay calm.
- If there's a possibility of the child being hurt, hold the child from behind.
- Remove the child from public situations.
- After the tantrum is over say, "I'm so glad you're feeling better now."
- Do not give children rewards after tantrums; go back to business as usual.
- Negotiate before the tantrum takes place.
- Praise the child when the tantrum is averted.
- Look for patterns. If the child cries every time you put his/her shoes on, the shoes may be too tight.

Giving in to tantrum requests is the worst thing you can do. The best way to handle tantrums is to do nothing. Don't pick up, comfort, or try to reason with a child during a tantrum.

Discipline for Toddlers

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| Provide Structure: | Try to provide a steady routine; toddlers can't handle the pressure of being rushed. |
| Be Positive: | Use positive commands: "Walk to the table" not "Don't run to the table." |
| Be Specific: | Say, "Please keep the truck on the floor and off the dining room table" not "Watch what you're doing." |
| Be Consistent: | Do not use idle threats you can't or don't intend to carry out. All caretakers should try to use the same methods of discipline. |
| Reward Desirable Behavior: | Toddlers need attention and rewards such as hugs, kisses, praise, etc. |
| Time-Out: | This is one effective method of disciplining toddlers. Time-out is a brief period of isolation when a child's misbehavior is too extreme to be ignored. It works because being alone and removed from all sources of attention for even a short time is unpleasant for children. |

Time- Out Tips

- ✓ Use time-out only for serious misbehavior such as a tantrum, fighting, or intentional destructiveness.
- ✓ Choose a time-out location that is dull, but safe and non-frightening.
- ✓ Don't talk to the child while he/she is in time-out.
- ✓ Calmly explain to the child why he/she was punished and what behavior will be expected in the future after the time-out is over.
- ✓ Make an extra effort to reward good behavior after time-out.
- ✓ Use time-out **immediately** after the misbehavior occurs.

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A toddler's temper tantrum can be frustrating and irritating. Remember you are the adult. Shaking is never a good form of discipline. Children as old as 4 years old have been known to suffer from the effects of Shaken Baby Syndrome. No matter how upset you are,

NEVER, NEVER SHAKE A TODDLER