

Managing normal tantrums: 10 tips for parents.

by North Carolina ABCD Project

1. **Minimize the need to say, "No".**
Store breakable items: and if possible, dangerous furniture.
2. **Use distraction.**
When frustration begins to mount, redirect the child to less frustrating or more acceptable activity.
3. **Present choices within the limits of what is acceptable.**
"Do you want to wear your red pajamas or your blue ones?"
4. **Pick your battles carefully.**
The more important the issue, Safety, for example, the more firmness and consistency are required.
5. **When a preschool child throws a tantrum, stay within the child's sight and carry on normal activities without talking to him.**
Some preschoolers need to be held in order to regain control.
6. **For an older child, establish the rule that he must go to his room until he calms down.**
When a tantrum occurs, tell him to leave, but do not lecture, threaten or argue. Model self-control.
7. **Take into account that your own emotions may interfere with effective management of a tantrum.**
Never let a child hurt himself, or others, including you. A child who is in danger of hurting himself (thrashing around on a hard floor, for example) should be moved to a safer place.
8. **Use words like "out of control" instead of "bad child" to describe tantrum-throwing behavior.**
Praise the child's ability to regain control after a tantrum. You might say, "You did a good job of getting yourself under control."
9. **Once a tantrum is over, the child is entitled to start over with a clean slate.**
Comfort may be given, but any original demands the child had should not be fulfilled. Otherwise, tantrums will become a way of life.
10. **"Catch your child being good."**
Try to establish an environment of positive reinforcement in the household, by commenting on and praising desirable behavior every few minutes as a general habit.

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