

# Temper Tantrums as Learning Opportunities

Recommendations for Parents

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What is under the surface?

Why are they common in ages 1-3?

Knowing that crying/screaming is more effective than other ways of satisfying needs

Parenting that reinforces tantrums

Low control of emotions (self-regulation)

Physical needs (hunger, fatigue, discomfort) overpower mental state

Lack of teaching/modeling self-control

High stress in the home/school

Feisty temperament: intense, sensitive, irregular, moody, distractible and active.

Potential developmental delays

First, address the origins

Prevent!

Teach more advanced ways to satisfy needs. Give choices! Praise efforts!

Do not give in to tantrum, even in public!

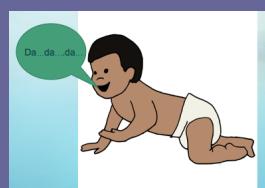
Ensure enough rest, healthy meals, and physical comfort

Teach/model self-control DAILY

Consider what sources of stress can be avoided

Seek evaluation for potential delays

Express rules in simple words



# Addressing Tantrums As Learning Opportunities



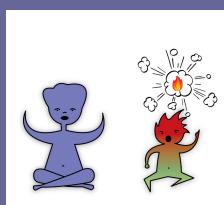
## Principles:

1. Behavior is the tip of the iceberg. Low emotional skills are under the surface.
2. Children develop at different paces, and some need more support from caretakers.

1. Calm yourself down. Give yourself a positive message



2. Wait quietly close to child. Do not reason or lecture. Just express you are waiting or helping him/her to calm down



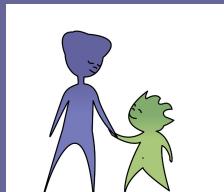
3. Once child has calmed down, praise him/her for being calm.



4. Now that he/she can hear you, repeat the rules calmly (not scolding) and show the appropriate way of obtaining what he/she wants.



5. Give him/her an opportunity to use the new skill. Reinforce with praise and rewards.



## Following Up

- Repeat the same procedure hundreds of times.
- Children learn by repetition, just as they had learned that temper tantrums were effective.
- Be patient! It can take months/years.
- Self-control is a life-long journey!
- Persistent children might ramp up the intensity of the tantrums for the first few days, but will slowly learn to calm down.
- Seek professional help if the tantrums become more frequent or intense after age 4; child holds breath and passes out; or there are other behavior concerns.

