



Kalamazoo CAN
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How to Deal with a Tantrum

Temper tantrums are a common childhood behavior which usually starts around age 1, and becomes less frequent by age 4 or 5. It is thought to be the child's way to express his or her anger and frustration.

Children, especially toddlers cannot show their emotions by words. Screaming and jumping in fury is a cry for you to notice that he is hungry, upset, bored. Sometimes they just have some excessive energy, and they only know one way to let it out.

You are not a bad parent if your child has these outbursts. Here are some tips for handling childhood tantrums safely:

- Stay calm.
- If there is 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 a child cries every time shoes are put on, the shoes may be too tight.
- Consult a pediatrician if the tantrums last for more than 15 to 20 minutes or if the child continually bangs his/her head against a wall or hurts him/herself in other ways.

Giving in to tantrum requests is the often worst thing you can do. The best way to handle tantrums is to do nothing, as long as the child is safe. Do not pick up, comfort or try to reason with a child during a tantrum. After it is over, review the tips above.

To learn more about child discipline and child abuse, visit the "Resources" section of our website at www.KalamazooCAN.com. Or call our office at (269) 552-4430.