

Temper Tantrums

What is a temper tantrum?

Temper tantrums are a common behavior problem in young children. Your child may show anger by lying on the floor, kicking, screaming, or even holding their breath. Tantrums occur because young children have not developed the emotional or physical maturity to handle or express anger and frustration. They are a normal part of child development, and most children will have at least one at some time.

What can parents do?

Try to understand why your child is frustrated and do not overreact. This will help you get your child through the tantrum and teach them better ways to handle their feelings.

- Do not give in to your child's tantrum. Teach your child that a tantrum is not a way to get your attention. If you give in, your child will use temper tantrums to get their way.
- Stay calm and keep your child safe. Children learn by example. If you stay calm, your child is more likely to calm down.
- Stick to a routine with your child. Keep eating and napping times the same each day. This should prevent a tantrum from your child being hungry or tired.
- Talk to your child about how they need to behave when you take them to a public place.
- Prepare for tantrums in public places. Don't overreact or bribe your child to stop. Strangers may look, but many people have gone through this and know that your child's tantrum does not mean that you are a bad parent.
- Look for signals that your child is getting angry and try to interest them in a new activity.
- Teach your child better ways to handle anger and tell you why they are upset. Give your child ideas for what to do instead of having a tantrum. Rewards work better than punishment when it comes to teaching your child ways to avoid tantrums.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This teaching sheet is meant to provide you with additional information about your child's care. Diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up should be provided by your health care professional.