



tantrums

tips for handling tantrums:

- **set your child up for success.** if you know that your child tends to unravel or have a meltdown when he's hungry, don't take him grocery shopping before dinner.
- **have a plan.** anticipate "trigger" situations and prepare your child for what he can expect. tell him, "we are going to the grocery store, and i know you remember that the last time we went it was hard. this time, if you stand next to me the entire time you will earn (a reward) when we are finished shopping."
- **always remain calm.** if your child has a tantrum, remain calm. you are your child's best teacher. he is looking to you to see how you communicate your own frustration.
- **label your child's feelings.** most young kids don't have the words to express how they are feeling, so instead they act out. help your child by saying "you seem angry that you can't play with the cereal box. i understand you're upset, but why don't you play with this ___ instead?"
 - if he continues to tantrum, tell him that you can't understand him when he is having a tantrum. let him know you'll talk to him when he calms down and can use his words.
- **do not reinforce a tantrum.** if you tell your child "no" but then give in to stop him from whining, you are inadvertently teaching your child that his behaviors work in getting what he wants.
- **always handle your child's tantrums in exactly the same manner.** no matter where your child has a tantrum, you must be prepared to deal with it the same way. show your child that you mean business and that you are consistent.
- **never threaten without follow-through.** don't threaten to remove your child from an activity or take him home if you don't mean it. this will only worsen tantrum behavior because he'll learn that he can escalate



his behavior in order to get what he wants without consequences.

tips to prevent tantrums from happening in the first place:

- direct your child's attention to something else. ("wow, look at that fire engine!")
- give your child a choice in small matters. ("do you want to eat peas or carrots?")
- stick to a daily routine that balances fun with rest and healthy food.
- anticipate when your child will be disappointed. ("we are going to buy groceries for dinner. we won't be buying cookies, but you can help me choose the fruit you want for later.")
- praise your child when he or she shows self-control and expresses feelings with words.

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