



# Temper Tantrums: 10 tips for parents

## Strategies for avoiding tantrums and keeping them from coming back.

- 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.

## Related Links

- Positive Parenting Homepage  
*A source of interesting perspectives on parenting and relating to schools*  
<http://www.positiveparenting.com/> accessed 4/10/2007