

SAFEGUARDING

It is that time of year when we are all getting tired and emotional! And guess what, our children are feeling tired and emotional too! This is when we may be experiencing more challenging behaviour including tantrums. So....

What is a tantrum

Tantrums are usually a short period of angry outburst or unreasonable behaviours like crying, screaming, shouting and throwing objects.

What causes a tantrum?

This is a normal part of growing up. Between the ages of one and four years, most children will have tantrums. As children grow they are learning to become more physically independent. For example, they may want to play, want to dress and feed themselves, or pour their own juice. Your child therefore can get very upset, if they are unable to do something or if they are stopped. A battle between freedom and frustration can lead to tantrums.

Tantrums can also occur when a child is:

- tired
- hungry
- feeling ignored
- worried or anxious - a younger child may be unable to tell you that they are anxious and they may cry, become clingy and have tantrums.

What can I do?

Your child's screams and yells can be alarming. You may feel angry, discouraged and hopeless. You will almost certainly be embarrassed if a tantrum occurs in a public place or in front of other people. It is not easy being a parent or carer of a toddler. However it is important to set the rules, so your child learns to deal with their emotions. Remember, it is only natural that children will try to push the limits. Here are some ideas which may work for you and your child:

Don't panic

The main thing to do is to stay calm and not to get upset. Just remind yourself that this is normal, that lots of parents do deal with it, be reassured that you will manage this too.

Ignore the tantrum

You should calmly continue with whatever you are doing - chatting to someone else, packing your shopping or whatever. Every so often check to make sure your child is safe. Ignoring your child is very hard, but if you answer back, or even smack them, you are giving them the attention they are demanding.

Be consistent with rules

You are trying to teach your child that rules are important and that you will stick to them

Pay attention to any good behaviour

As soon as you see any signs of calming down, e.g. they stop screaming, praise them. Turn your full attention back to the child, talk to them with warmth and admiration. If you reward the new behaviour like this, your child is more likely to stay calm and carry on being good.

What can I do to prevent temper tantrums?

Planning ahead can help to avoid a tantrum, if you know when they are likely to occur or notice a pattern your child shows before having a tantrum. Here are some examples:

- manage boredom when in a waiting room by taking their favourite books and toys to the doctor's surgery with you
- storing their favourite biscuits out of sight, rather than where they can see them
- managing a tired child by giving them an afternoon nap, instead of staying awake all day
- managing hunger by offering a snack after nursery at 3.30pm, instead of having to wait until 5.00pm for tea
- distraction can help, you may be able to avoid a tantrum by diverting your child's attention.

Working together to keep our children safe and happy.

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