

# TEMPER TANTRUMS

## WHY

### DEVELOPMENTALLY CORRECT:

- releases frustrations
- need to express feelings
- assert themselves
- gain some control in their lives
- lack of control of their emotions
- hunger, boredom, overstimulation, exhaustion
- too many choices, too few limits

### EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES:

- genetic disposition
- extremes of discipline
- history of illness
- parent/child personality clashes (outgoing vs. shy)
- parental problems (depression, overworked, financial worries, marital conflicts)

## PREVENTION:

1. Keep a record of tantrums — note patterns, time, preceding events
2. Encourage different methods of release — allow them to vent and 'let off steam'.
3. Tailor schedule to toddler's temperament
4. Offer snacks often
5. Reduce the need to say 'no' — it's a trigger for tantrums. Pick your battles
6. Try to say 'yes'. Better to say yes now than later after the tantrum has started. Restate something so you don't have to say no. "You may not skip your bath, but you can finish reading your book first".
7. Don't straddle. Kids read 'maybe' (said to avoid a confrontation) as a 'yes'.
8. Don't over-control — it causes rebellion
9. Provide choices
10. Anticipate frustration — don't eliminate challenges because they are good for growth — but assist children to ease their frustrations
11. Avoid situational exhaustion
12. Stick to your principles — don't reinforce tantrums by giving in
13. Commend good behavior — 'catch them being good'
14. Role model healthy frustration

## ONCE THE TANTRUM HAS STARTED:

1. Stay calm — your anger can fuel the fire — speak softly
2. Don't use physical punishment — you could lose control
3. Don't try to use logic or argue your kid out of a tantrum
4. Physically protect kid — move to safe area
5. Express empathy — "I know it's frustrating when you can't watch TV"
6. Try holding your toddler — depending on personality
7. Distraction — humor
8. Ignore — the child will not have an audience for his tantrum