



Radio Stations : **All Community Radio Stations**  
Subject : **Early Childhood Development**  
Audience : **Parents, caregivers and educators**  
Program Topic : **Dealing with tantrums (LOVE)**

**Guidelines to the presenter**

- Presenter – please familiarize yourself with the brief and the use the facts effectively by referring to them from time to time during the show.
- You should be seen as a peer rather than an authority.
- Offer guidance or opinion rather than telling people what to do.
- Encourage people to seek further information
- Always keep the objectives and outcomes in mind and drive these.

**Topic:**

Dealing with tantrums

**Objectives:**

- Enable understanding of appropriate positive behavior management
- Highlight that tantrums are a normal part of child’s development
- Underline why tantrums happen
- Build knowledge of how to handle tantrums appropriately and positively

## Introduction

On this show, we celebrate the fact that you are the most important person in your child's life. You have the power to give your child the best possible start in life and it doesn't have to cost you a cent. All it takes is your love, play and talk.

You're shopping with your toddler in a busy shop. He or she has seen a toy or some sweets that you don't want to buy. Soon you find yourself at the center of a shouting and screaming tantrum. Everyone's looking at you, and your face is burning with embarrassment.

Could you have prevented the tantrum? What's the best response? And why do these emotional meltdowns happen in the first place?

Questions	Facts/Information
1. <i>What is a tantrum?</i>	A tantrum is the expression of a young child's frustration with the challenges of the moment and they are a normal part of growing up. Tantrums are extremely common among children aged 18-36 months. They come in all shapes and sizes. They can involve spectacular explosions of anger, frustration and disorganised behaviour (when your child 'loses it'). You might see crying, screaming, stiffening limbs, an arched back, kicking, falling down, flailing about or running away. In some cases, children even hold their breath, vomit, break things or get aggressive as part of a tantrum.
2. <i>Why do they happen?</i>	Toddlers feel so passionately about everything, and they simply don't have the capacity to control themselves yet. Perhaps

<p>3. <i>How often do they happen?</i></p>	<p>your child is having trouble figuring something out or completing a specific task. Maybe your child can't find the words to express his or her thoughts or feelings. Whatever the challenge, frustration with the situation might trigger anger — resulting in a temper tantrum.</p> <p>Consider this: Most 2-year-olds have a limited vocabulary. Parents might understand what a toddler says only some of the time. Strangers understand even less. When your child wants to tell you something and you don't understand — or you don't comply with your child's wishes — you might have a tantrum on your hands. If your child is thirsty, hungry or tired, his or her threshold for frustration is likely to be lower — and a tantrum more likely.</p> <p>If your child throws tantrums, you're not alone. Researchers in the United States asked over 1200 parents about their children's tantrums. They found that 87% of under two year olds have tantrums and 91 % of those between 2-3 have tantrums. The parents in this study reported that, on average, tantrums lasted for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• two minutes in one-year-olds</li><li>• four minutes in children aged 2-3</li></ul>
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<p>4. <i>I thought that tantrums only happened when they were two? But it seems like they happen at other ages too?</i></p> <p>5. <i>When does your child stop having tantrums?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• five minutes in four-year-olds.</li></ul> <p>And the tantrums occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• eight times a week for one-year-olds</li><li>• nine times a week for two-year-olds</li><li>• six times a week for three-year-olds</li><li>• five times a week for four-year-olds.</li></ul> <p>Every parent has been warned about the "terrible twos," but many parents find that it's actually the threes and fours that are more challenging. When it comes to temperament, some kids can actually have a more difficult time during the threes than the twos, as children this age want to assert their independence.</p> <p>You'll see fewer tantrums as your child gets older and better at handling bad feelings. Your child will also get better at communicating his wants and needs using words. But tantrums can go on – even into adulthood – if they become a reliable way for your child to get what he wants. Therefore you have to be careful not to reward tantrums!</p> <p>It might seem as if your child plans to misbehave simply to get on your nerves, but that's not the case - young children don't have evil plans to frustrate or embarrass</p>
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	<p>their parents. For most toddlers, tantrums are simply a way to express frustration. For older children, tantrums might be a learned behavior. If you reward tantrums with something your child wants — or you allow your child to get out of things by throwing a tantrum — the tantrums are likely to continue.</p>
<p>6. <i>Do young children have tantrums on purpose?</i></p>	<p>There is not foolproof way to prevent tantrums, but there's plenty you can do to encourage good behavior in even the youngest children. Put a stop to tantrums and meltdowns by focusing and giving enough attention to your child. The most important thing is emotional connection, giving your child one-on-one attention. Once an emotional connection is made, through spending special time alone with your child, the most important thing to work on is training. If we take the time to teach them how to do things, from personal care to helping with dinner, they will feel more empowered and less likely to act out.</p>
<p>7. <i>Can tantrums be prevented?</i></p>	<p>The more time we spend on training, the less time we have to spend on correcting negative behavior. Additionally you can:</p>

- **Be consistent.** Establish a daily routine so that your child knows what to expect. Stick to the routine as much as possible, including nap time and bedtime. It's also important to set reasonable limits and follow them consistently.
- **Plan ahead.** If you need to run errands, go when your child isn't likely to be hungry or tired. If you're expecting to wait in line, pack a small toy or snack to occupy your child.
- **Encourage your child to use words.** Young children understand many more words than they're able to express. If your child isn't yet speaking — or speaking clearly — you might teach him or her sign language for words such as "I want," "more," "drink," "hurt" and "tired." The more easily your child can communicate with you, the less likely you are to struggle with tantrums. As your child gets older, help him or her put feelings into words.
- **Let your child make choices.** To give your toddler a sense of control, let

him or her make appropriate choices. "Would you like to wear your red shirt or your blue shirt?" "Would you like to eat strawberries or bananas?" "Would you like to read a book or build a tower with your blocks?" Then compliment your child on his or her choices.

- **Praise good behavior.** Offer extra attention when your child behaves well. Give your child a hug or tell your child how proud you are when he or she shares toys, follows directions, and so on.
- **Use distraction to change your child's focus.** If you sense frustration brewing, try to distract your child. Suggest a new activity or change location.
- **Avoid situations likely to trigger tantrums.** If your child begs for toys or treats when you shop, steer clear of "temptation islands" full of eye-level goodies. If your toddler acts up in restaurants, make reservations so that you won't have to wait — or choose restaurants that offer quick service.
- **Reduce stress.** Tired, hungry and

<p>8. <i>What should one do when your child is busy having a tantrum?</i></p>	<p>over stimulated children are more likely to throw tantrums.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Be aware of how your child is feeling.</b> If you can see a tantrum brewing, step in and try distracting your child with another activity.</li><li>• <b>Identify tantrum triggers.</b> Certain situations – shopping, visiting or mealtimes – might frequently involve temper tantrums. Think of ways to make these events easier on your child. For example, you could time the situations so your child isn't tired, eats before you go out, or doesn't need to behave for too long.</li></ul> <p>When a tantrum occurs, <b>stay calm</b> (or pretend to!). If you get angry, it will make the situation worse and harder for both of you. If you need to speak at all, keep your voice calm and level, and act deliberately and slowly. Stay nearby, even if he won't let you touch him. He needs to know you're there, and still love him. Be calm and reassuring. Don't try to reason with him. Think about what you feel like when you're swept with exhaustion, rage and hopelessness. If you do lose it, you want someone else there holding things together,</p>
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9. *What if my child becomes destructive or dangerous?*

reassuring you and helping you get yourself under control.

He also needs to know that as soon as he's ready, you'll help him recollect himself. Afterwards, make up. Take some "cozy time" together.

If a tantrum escalates, remove your child from the situation and enforce a timeout:

- **Select a timeout spot.** Seat your child in a boring place, such as in a chair in the living room or on the floor in the hallway. Pull the chair away from the walls and furniture if you think your child might try to engage you by peeling off wallpaper or causing other types of damage.
- **Be firm.** You might say, "You don't hit. Sit down."
- **Wait for your child to calm down.** This might take a few minutes or longer.
- **Stick with it.** If your child begins to wander around before the timeout is over, return him or her to the designated timeout spot. Remind your child that he or she is still in timeout.
- **Don't engage your child.** Don't

<p><i>10. Sometimes when my child is having a tantrum I lose my cool and get cross too. (sometimes I see parents losing control and getting very angry when their child is having a tantrum – is this a good way to handle tantrums?)</i></p> <p><i>11. But what about tantrums in public places?</i></p>	<p>respond to anything your child says while he or she is in timeout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Know when to end the timeout.</b> When your child has calmed down, end the timeout and return to your usual activities. You might say, "You're sitting quietly. Are you ready to keep your hands to yourself?"</li></ul> <p>When your child has a tantrum, it is important to stay calm and be his rock to help him recover. This helps him develop important coping skills that help him learn to manage strong feelings as he grows. Your nurturing response also makes him feel loved, building his self-confidence, self-esteem, and giving him a model for positive, healthy relationships.</p> <p>If your child has a tantrum in public, ignore the behavior if you can. If your child becomes too disruptive, take him or her to a private spot — such as a rest area or the car — for a timeout. When your child calms down, you might say, "You're sitting quietly. Are you ready to behave while we shop?" If not, continue the timeout.</p> <p>Remember, though, it's important to eventually return to the activity — or your</p>
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<p><i>12. It is very stressful for parents when children have tantrums in public places? How can they handle that themselves?</i></p>	<p>child will learn that a tantrum is an effective way to escape a given situation.</p> <p>Dealing with tantrums can be enormously draining and stressful for parents. It helps to develop a strategy. Have a clear plan for how you'll handle a tantrum in whatever situation you're in and concentrate on implementing your plan when the tantrum occurs. Also keep your sense of humour and to see the funny side of your child's crazy behavior, but don't laugh at the tantrum, as this can make it worse or hurt your child's feelings. If other people give you dirty looks, ignore them. They've either never had children or it's been so long since they had a young child they've forgotten what it's like.</p>
<p><i>13. Often I see fights happening with children about sharing and this can end up in a tantrum, what can I do about this?</i></p>	<p>Teaching children to share and have good relationships is a very important role of the parent. You can help your child to learn to share, and prevent difficult conflict situations by:</p> <p><b>Talking it up.</b> When kids fight over toys, help them figure out what's really going on. If a friend is holding something back, explain to your child how his buddy might be feeling. For instance: "Josh really likes that toy, and he doesn't want anyone to</p>

	<p>play with it right now." Help your preschooler put his own feelings into words too.</p> <p><b>Teaching your preschooler to problem-solve.</b> If your child has a death grip on a toy truck that his playmate wants, chances are he's thinking, "It's either him or me." The concept of sharing the truck may not even have occurred to him. Encourage your preschooler to take turns with the truck (setting an alarm to mark each child's turn may help), reassure him that sharing isn't the same as giving away, and point out that if he shares his toys with friends, they'll be more inclined to share theirs with him.</p> <p><b>Setting the stage.</b> Before a playdate, ask your preschooler if there's anything he'd rather not share, and help him find a good place to keep those special toys. Then ask him to think of some things that would be fun for him and his visitor to play with together, such as building blocks, and sports equipment. That will put him in a sharing frame of mind when his guest arrives.</p>

## Conclusion

All children have tantrums and this sometimes leaves parents very frustrated and sometimes helpless. Tantrums are a normal part of child development as children struggle to learn to express themselves and control their feelings. Handling tantrums in a positive calm and firm way helps children learn in a positive relationship.

Young children do not have tantrums on purpose or to be naughty. Our first reaction is often to get cross and shout but this may actually make matters worse...

## Learning outcomes

After listening to this show the audience should:

- Understand that shouting, screaming and punishing small children may not solve the problem.
- Understand that handling tantrums in a positive way helps children to deal with this better.
- Understand that tantrums are a normal part of child's development
- Understand why tantrums happen
- Be aware of how to handle tantrums appropriately and positively when they happen