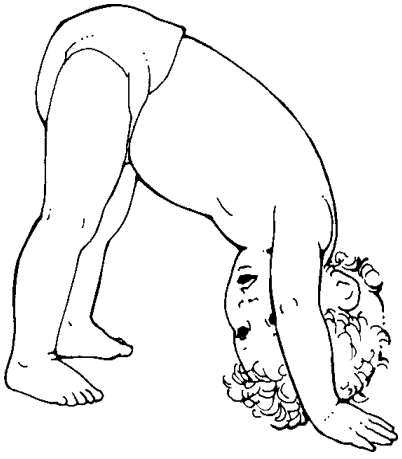


## Temper Tantrums



Tantrums are a normal part of growing up. Between the ages of one and three, your child may cry, shout, hit, bite, kick, hold his breathe, or throw himself on the floor. It does not mean that your child does not like you or that he is bad or mean. He is not yet able to tell you when he is upset or wants something. This can cause him to get mad and may lead to a temper tantrum.

He may also throw a tantrum if he wants your attention or to get you to do what he wants you to do.

## How To Handle A Temper Tantrum

- When he throws a tantrum, do not give him what he wants. If you do, he will know what to do to get what he wants. If you handle his tantrums the same way every time, many of the tantrums will stop.
- Tell him you will help him solve the problem he is having. This will help him trust you.
- Ignore him. Do not talk to him, look at him, or touch him. This is one of the best ways to handle tantrums as long as he is not hurting someone. Ignoring will not work if there are other people in the room and they do not ignore him. But do not threaten to leave your child to try to control tantrums. This may cause your child to not trust you.
- Keep your child from hurting himself or breaking something. You may have to firmly hold him, without hurting him, until he calms down.

- If you can, separate him from other children.
- If you have to, take him out of the room.
- When the tantrum is over, tell him you know that something made him mad.
- Tell your child that you love him.

## Preventing Tantrums

- If he just starts to throw a tantrum, you can try to get him to do something else. For example, you can play a game with him or play his favorite music.
- Give him love and attention at times when he is not throwing a tantrum.
- Allow him to explore. Give him “new” toys. Things like wooden spoons and plastic bowls that you have around the house work great.
- Make sure he has chances to explore his world. He wants to learn about all the different things around. If there is something that you do not want him to play with, move it.
- Being tired, hungry, or too excited is a big reason for throwing tantrums. Set regular times to sleep and eat. If he seems too excited, help him to play or do something that is more quiet.
- Expecting him to do more than he is able to do at his age can cause a tantrum. For example, he probably can't sit a long time, finish things he starts, or be neat.
- Try to stay calm when your child gets upset. He will be watching you to see if you get mad. If you find that you can't stay calm or you feel like hitting him, be sure he is safe and leave the room until you calm down.

**The Guiding Childhood Behavior Series  
has pamphlets on the following topics:**

- **biting**
- **crying**
- **discipline**
- **lying**
- **going to the store**
- **stealing**
- **teaching independence**
- **temper tantrums**
- **toilet training**

**Contact the Kent County Health Department  
if you would like to know more about these or  
other childhood behavior topics.**

**Kent County Health Department  
700 Fuller Avenue NE  
Grand Rapids MI 49503  
(616) 336-3040**

Copies of this brochure are available on the Kent County  
Health Department web site at  
[www.co.kent.mi.us/health/publications.htm](http://www.co.kent.mi.us/health/publications.htm)

# **TEMPER TANTRUMS**

**Guiding Childhood Behavior Series**



**This pamphlet tells you:**

- **why toddlers throw tantrums.**
- **how to prevent a tantrum.**