

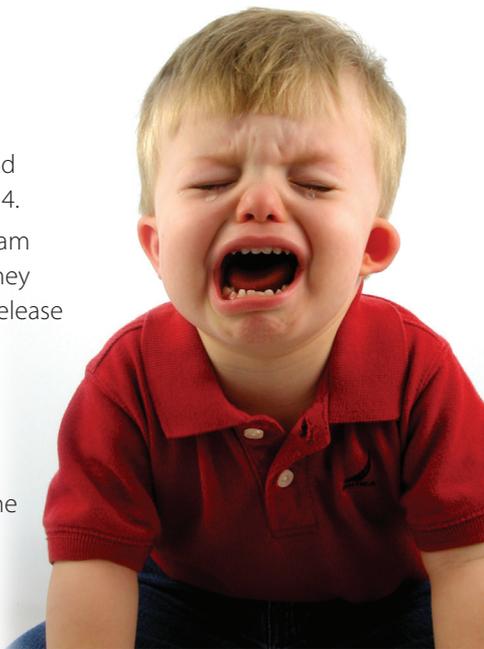
# Temper Tantrums

## What are temper tantrums?

- Temper tantrums are a normal part of child development.
- Tantrums are most common between 1 and 3 years of age, and should taper off by age 4.
- Tantrums are a child's way of letting off steam when angry, frustrated or overwhelmed. They provide a young child the opportunity to release the stress of sensory overload.

## How can parents help?

- Make sure your child has enough rest and routine meal times. Children are more prone to tantrums when they're tired or hungry.
- Choose your battles with your child. If your little one is angry because he doesn't want to ride in his car seat, stand your ground. But if he wants to wear his red sweater instead of a blue one, let him.
- Have realistic expectations. Don't expect toddlers to behave on 4-hour long shopping trips or to keep their hands in their laps at the toy store. Try bringing along a book or small toy to occupy his hands when you have to take him shopping.
- Change the environment to help a child who is feeling overwhelmed (speak calmly, turn down TV or music, dim bright lights).
- Recognize desirable behavior with attention, praise and encouragement. "Look at that, you were so mad, and you were able to calm down."



- When your child has a tantrum, stay calm yourself. Don't reinforce the behavior by giving in to the demand that started the tantrum.
- Help your child calm down by taking deep breaths. Say, "Breathe with me. You can do it."
- Label your child's feelings. "You seem mad." Teach your child the words to use. "I'm mad. My toy is broken."
- Target the desirable behavior or redirect to an activity that meets the same need. "When you are mad, it is okay to scribble on this paper."
- Some children hold their breath, turn blue and faint during tantrums. This will not harm your child. As soon as they faint, they begin breathing normally again.
- Do not take it personally. Your child is just trying to figure out how the world works and needs your guidance.
- Temper tantrums should start to taper off by age 3-4. If you have questions about the severity, length or frequency of your child's tantrums, discuss the concern with your pediatrician, especially if the child seems likely to harm himself or others.



For more information on parenting and current classes, visit [CHKD.org/ParentingResources](http://CHKD.org/ParentingResources) or [CHKD.org/classes](http://CHKD.org/classes).

**Your child's pediatrician should be your primary source of advice about your child's health.**

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