

ACS Family Advocacy Program

Dealing with Temper Tantrums

April is Child Abuse Prevention Awareness month! One big thing that often comes up with families raising toddlers is tantrums. Tantrums can be difficult to deal with and lead to stress both on the parent and the child. Toddlers are most likely to have tantrums because they do not have the words to express their wants and needs physically or emotionally. There are several things you can do to help limit tantrums:

1. Schedules and routines are very helpful for children as it helps them to know what's coming next and how to respond.
2. Giving your child a small choice between 2 to 3 items- i.e. do you want carrots or an apple for a snack. Make sure either choice is something you are fine with them picking.
3. Anticipate their disappointments- i.e. we have a long shopping trip today and we are not going to buy toys but we can buy your favorite fruit to have for snack.
4. Praise your child when they show self-control in difficult situations and express their feelings with words.
5. Redirect their attention to more enjoyable things if you know a tantrum is about to occur.

Sometimes it is impossible to prevent a tantrum so there are some things you can do in the moment as well:

1. Tell your child what you expect from them and show confidence that they will comply.
2. Remain calm. You are your child's best role model.
3. Hold your child during a tantrum if this is something that makes them feel more secure.
4. Take your child to a quiet place if possible to finish their tantrum. Stay with them through this time as an emotional support.
5. Resist overreacting the tantrum and try to keep your sense of humor.

The good news is that most children grow out of tantruming behavior by the age of four. Until then, stay strong, stay calm, and emotionally connect with your child so they know they have your support and guidance through their difficult emotions.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Family Advocacy Program at on our Belgium hotline at +32 (0)472 90 1068 or at our Netherlands hotline at +31 (0)613 21 6737 or our website page <https://home.army.mil/benelux>.

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