



## Tips for Managing Recurring Tantrums

**Basic Facts:** Tantrums describe a group of behaviors that may include crying, screaming, and/or hitting. Tantrums occur as a result of an unmet need. Children with limited verbal skills are more likely to have tantrums. The way parents respond to tantrums will impact the probability of another tantrum occurring in the future.

Parents may find that tantrums are more difficult to manage in public or when there are observers. Below are some tips to help parents decrease the frequency, duration, and/or intensity of tantrums. These strategies are recommended for non-emergency situations only. If the child poses a danger to him/herself or others, parents and caregiver should do what they think is best to keep the child safe.

<b>Challenging Behaviors</b>	<b>Do Not</b>	<b>Do</b>
Crying	Talk to the child about why he/she is crying or tell him/her to stop crying. Start offering the child things they like.	Increase proximity to the child and wait for the child to show signs of de-escalation. Then encourage him/her to express what it is that he/she needs using words or visuals.
Dropping to the floor	Scream at the child to get up or try to lift him/her up immediately. Offer the child something in exchange for getting up.	Move next to the child to ensure that he/she does not bump into anything. Calmly tell the child to get up and wait until he/she complies.
Hitting	Hit or threaten the child with punishments. Tell the child that he/she is hurting your feelings.	Maintain a calm demeanor and follow through on behavioral expectations. Use if/then statements to help the child recognize what will happen if the behavior continues and what will happen if the behavior stops.
Screaming	Scream back at the child or immediately give the child what he/she is demanding to get.	Prompt the child to say what he/she needs in a quieter voice. Model for the child what needs to be



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		said and how to say it. Then wait for the child to comply.
Throwing objects	Pick up the objects that are thrown and/or yell at the child to stop.	Calmly tell the child that he/she will need to clean up any mess that is made. Remove any objects that may be dangerous. Escort the child to another location where there are fewer or no objects to throw if it is not possible to remove dangerous objects. Then wait for the child to calm down.

#### Remember to ALWAYS

- Prevent tantrums by avoiding triggers
- Teach replacement behaviors
- Follow through on expectations
- Maintain a calm demeanor
- Ride out the tantrum
- Praise the child for calming down or showing a desired behavior

#### Remember to NEVER

- Escalate with the child
- Engage in a power struggle
- Remind the child of his/her behaviors after he/she has calmed down
- Bribe the child with incentives
- Show anxiety when others are observing