

Tantrums

It's estimated that one in five two-year-olds has two tantrums each day - but remember, that means four out of five don't! A tantrum is phoney - it is manipulative behaviour. Responding to it teaches two-year-olds that the proper response when you don't get what you want is to get unhappy. (Source: www.psychologyhelp.com)



What are the common difficulties?

- A tantrum is a method of expression, the child is not naughty or bad
- Temper tantrums are a natural part of development and usually occur between the ages of one and four
- Remember that tantrums may occur at a later age if the child has any kind of learning difficulty

Why do tantrums occur?

- Tantrums usually occur when a child is frustrated, anxious, frightened or angry
- The child can't properly understand what the adult is saying to them
- A child doesn't yet have the appropriate communication to be able to express how they feel
- The child does not get his or her own way
- If the child is hungry, tired, feeling ill or is uncomfortable



How can we help?

- Avoid things you know frustrates the child
- Avoid doing stressful things if you know the child is tired or hungry
- Don't let the child get too hungry
- Don't say no to everything
- Ensure that the child has a method of communication speech, signs or symbols
- Find a way of teaching the child to express their emotions
- Ensure that periods of stillness are followed by periods of activity
- Make sure there are opportunities for the child to choose their own activity
- Give the child frequent opportunities where they have your undivided attention
- Keep rules and boundaries consistent

What to do when a child has a tantrum

- Distract the child if a tantrum is brewing
- Remain calm, be kind, understand
- Pause before you act
- Remove the child
- Wait until the child calms down
- Don't offer a reward to stop the tantrum
- Don't threaten to leave the child, stay with them and watch in case they injure themselves
- Ignore inappropriate behaviour such as kicking, screaming, slamming doors (as long as no one is getting hurt) but don't ignore the child