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Listening, learning, and living together: it's the science of life.

Dealing with Toddler Temper Tantrums¹

Diana Converse²

Most of us have experienced the incredible tantrums of toddlers. Now, remember, my children are perfect, so I never personally dealt with this... Well, except maybe a time or two hundred. Toddlers have tantrums because they get frustrated easily and have very few problem-solving skills. Most likely, a tantrum will happen when toddlers are hungry, exhausted, or overexcited.

So what are you supposed to do when a faced with a tantrum? Here's a few recommendations from family life educator Diana Converse.

First, try to remain calm. Shaking, slapping, spanking, or screaming at your child will make the tantrum worse. Set a positive example for your child by remaining in control of yourself and of your emotions.

Second, pause before you act. Take at least 30 seconds to decide how to handle the tantrum. Consider distracting them or taking them to a private place to calm down. Also, you might just hold them. This can be comforting to children because they don't like to be out of control—it scares them.

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2. Diana Converse, Extension Agent III, Hillsborough County, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. Reviewed by Donna Davis and Suzanna Smith, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, University of Florida.

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Third, always wait until your child calms down before talking about the situation. You cannot reason with a screaming child. And, fourth, comfort and reassure your child that you still love them, even though you disapprove of their behavior.

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