# Children's Sadness

## Tantrums in Children: How to Handle Them?

Many parents face tantrums in children, especially between the ages of 1.5 and 6. This period can feel like an emotional storm: the child may scream, fall to the floor, cry, or even hit their head or bite. These moments may seem chaotic, especially when parents feel confused or powerless.

### Causes of Tantrums:

Tantrums are a result of psycho-emotional tension. Many factors affect children: noise, lack of sleep, hunger, teething, or even a tense family atmosphere. Imagine an adult coming home after a long, stressful day feeling irritated by every small detail. For children, these feelings are amplified by their emotional immaturity. Unable to articulate their emotions verbally, their bodies "explode" with feelings.

### The Role of Parents:

Parents often feel trapped when dealing with tantrums. The first experience of such outbursts is unforgettable. If it happens repeatedly, adults might start fearing these emotional explosions, avoiding conflicts or, conversely, becoming irritated. It’s easy to fall into a vicious cycle: the more helpless you feel, the more strongly the child senses your state, reacting even more intensely.

It’s important to remember that tantrums are a normal part of a child’s development. They don’t make you a bad parent. These moments are challenging but also an opportunity to strengthen your bond with your child.

### How to Help Your Child and Yourself:

The first and most important step is to stay calm. This is easier said than done when your child is screaming at the top of their lungs, but your calmness is a powerful tool. Your reaction should be firm yet emotionally neutral. Remember, at this moment, you are your child’s anchor. Gentle hugs and a steady, confident tone can help your child feel the boundaries within which they can calm down.

For example, if your child is crying because they were denied a toy, instead of arguing, you can say:  
*"I understand you really want this toy, but we can’t get it now. You can hug me when you’re ready."*

### Analyze the Causes:

It’s essential to analyze the situations when tantrums occur. This will help you anticipate and prevent them. What triggers are present? Was there a disruption in the daily routine, a missed meal, or fatigue? For example, if you notice that meltdowns are more frequent after long outdoor playtime, plan quieter activities or allow your child to rest.

### How to Respond to a Tantrum:

* **Move the child to a quiet space:** When a tantrum begins, take your child to a calm area away from spectators. This is important, as an audience can increase a child’s anxiety and pressure.
* **Offer a safe space:** Encourage your child to cry or express their feelings in a specific room. Be nearby, providing a sense of security without yielding to unreasonable demands.

If the tantrum escalates, hold your child gently but firmly to create a sense of boundaries. Say something like:  
*"I’m here with you. I understand this is hard for you right now."*

For instance, if your child protests about leaving a playground, prepare them in advance:  
*"In five more minutes, we’ll head home to do something fun, like drawing a house."*

### Preventing Tantrums:

Tantrums are easier to prevent than to calm. Plan visits to noisy places carefully and explain to your child what to expect. If you’re going to a shopping mall or an amusement park, let them know it will be a short visit and outline what will happen afterward. For example:  
*"After we leave the store, we’ll go home and enjoy your favorite cookies with tea."*

**A Practical Example:**

A father of a three-year-old boy shared how his son didn’t want to leave an amusement park. The father began explaining in advance:  
*"We’ll ride one carousel, and then we’ll head home."*  
Initially, the child protested, but after a few repetitions, he started understanding and calming down.

### Recap: Clear Rules for Managing Tantrums

1. **Stay calm:**  
   Your composure is the key. Children sense your emotional state, and your calmness helps them settle faster.
2. **Don’t give in to unreasonable demands:**  
   Maintain your decision despite the tantrum. This teaches your child that crying or screaming won’t change the outcome, helping establish healthy boundaries.
3. **Move to a quiet place:**  
   If the tantrum occurs in public, take your child somewhere private. This reduces stress from outside attention.
4. **Create a sense of safety with hugs:**  
   Gentle but firm hugs provide a feeling of safety and boundaries. Say something like:  
   *"I see you’re upset. I’m here with you. When you’re ready, we can talk about what made you sad."*
5. **Acknowledge their emotions:**  
   Verbally express your child’s feelings:  
   *"You’re upset because you didn’t get the toy, but I’m here, and we’ll work through this together."*
6. **Avoid punishment:**  
   A tantrum is a sign of an immature nervous system, not deliberate manipulation. Punishment increases helplessness and anxiety.
7. **Prepare in advance:**  
   Explain upcoming events that might be unpleasant for your child (e.g., leaving the park):  
   *"Five more minutes on the swings, and then we’ll go home."*
8. **Use distraction:**  
   If you sense a tantrum brewing, redirect your child’s attention with a game or task:  
   *"Let’s see what other fun toys are on the shelf."*
9. **Identify triggers:**  
   Track what causes tantrums—hunger, fatigue, or noise. The better you understand the causes, the easier it is to prevent them.
10. **Help your child process emotions:**  
    Remember, your child needs time and guidance to learn how to manage emotions. Stay by their side, speak calmly, and remind them of your love and support without compromising important rules.

By following these principles, you create a safe space for your child to express their emotions while teaching them how to navigate difficult feelings.