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Crying in childhood

Children cry for many reasons. Crying is an emotional response to a distressing experience or situation. The degree of a child's distress depends on the child's developmental level and past experiences. Children cry when they feel pain, fear, sadness, frustration, confusion, anger, and when they cannot express their feelings.

Crying is a normal response to upsetting situations that a child cannot resolve. When the child's coping skills are used up, crying is automatic and natural.

Over time, a child learns to express feelings of frustration, anger, or confusion without crying. Parents may need to set guidelines to help the child develop appropriate behaviors.

Praise the child for not crying until the right time and place. Teach other responses to distressing situations. Encourage children to use their words to explain what is upsetting them.

As children develop more coping and problem-solving skills, they will cry less often. As they mature, boys tend to cry less than girls. Many believe this difference between boys and girls is a learned behavior.

Temper tantrums are unpleasant and disruptive behaviors or emotional outbursts. They often occur in response to unmet needs or desires. Tantrums are more likely to occur in younger children or in children who cannot express their needs or control their emotions when they are frustrated.

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