



How to reduce your child's meltdowns...

The world is a large and scary place to a child. In order to understand and stop a meltdown, it's important to consider why it happened in the first place. Communication is vital in understanding the reason for the meltdown and helping find a resolution for the child.

Listen to your child. Really, really listen. It takes practice and patience to learn to listen for what is important to your child instead of what is important to you. Learning to identify what's important to your child can make a big impact on preventing tantrums.

Don't gang up on your child. Teamwork and co-parenting is very effective in many circumstances, but be aware of how intimidating two adults can be to a child who is upset. Rather, a child may be more comfortable and more likely to open up to one parent.

Be objective. Children are very perceptive and your child will respond to your emotional state. Take a minute to calm down in order to prevent emotional reactions from both you and your child.

Acknowledge their needs without giving in. Let your child know that you understand what they want, then help him/her identify an alternate behavior that is more appropriate. "I see that you want my attention. When you're done yelling, use your calm voice to let me know you're ready to talk."

Keep the lines of communication open. Be calm, considerate, and LISTEN! Avoid power struggles—judgments and emotionally fueled comments will only escalate your child. Let them be heard.

Be responsible with your authority. Be aware of how and when you are exerting your authority. If you use your authority cautiously, you will increase your child's motivation to comply with your requests.

Help your child recognize and manage their emotions. When your child is in a calm state (NOT mid tantrum), talk about triggers (what makes them mad), their emotions, and coping skills (deep breaths, count to 10).

THE KIDS WHO NEED THE MOST LOVE WILL ASK FOR IT IN THE MOST UNLOVING OF WAYS.

Talk to your child's teacher or even the school social worker! Working together with school staff is important to create a positive school experience for your child!

A few more tips:

- Be cognizant of your own behaviors. If you follow repetitive routines or behaviors that lead to meltdowns, take a step back and consider how your actions are impacting your child.
- Model the behaviors you want to see in your child. Children learn by example.
- Be aware of blame, whether self-blame or child-directed blame, Communication is critical in resolving the meltdown, placing blame doesn't solve anything.