



Tantrums



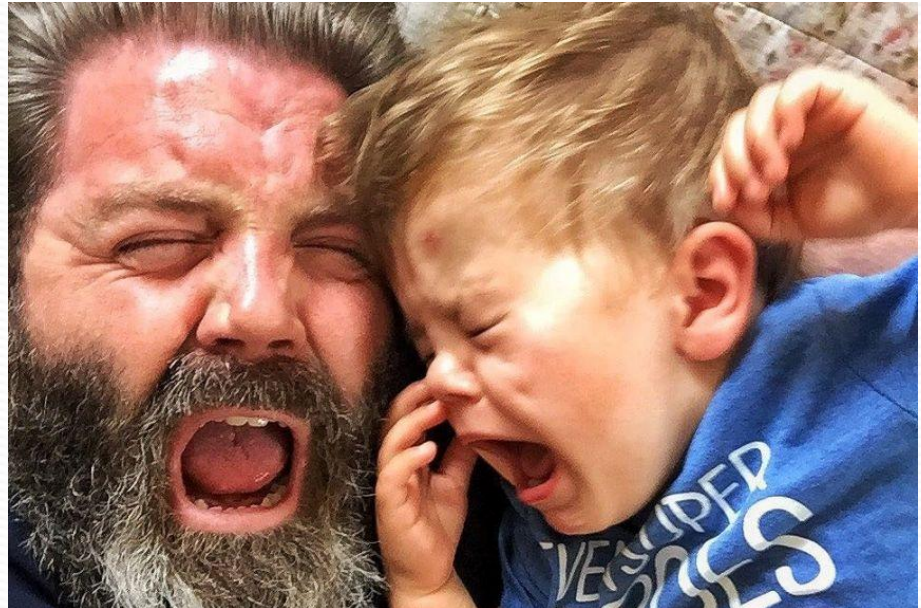
Discussion

1. Think about your child's most recent tantrum. How did you respond? Do you know what caused the tantrum?
2. When does your child have his or her tantrums? (When you are away from home? When she missed her nap? When he did not get something he wanted right away?)
3. How do you usually react to a tantrum (fight or flight?) How would you like to react? What can you do to change your reaction to your child's behavior?

What does a true Tantrum look like?

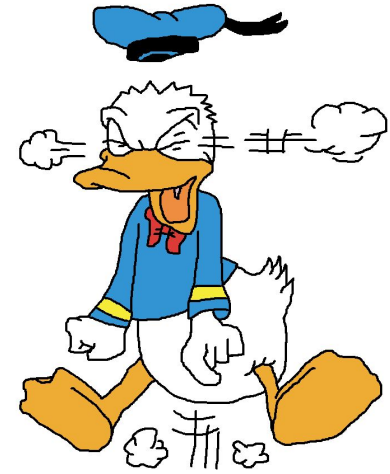
Definition: an uncontrolled outburst of anger and frustration, typically in a young child. You might observe:

- Hitting
- Throwing
- Kicking
- Lying down
- Screaming
- Yelling
- Crying
- Whining



With a true tantrum you cannot:

- Calm your child down
- Distract
- Reason with your child

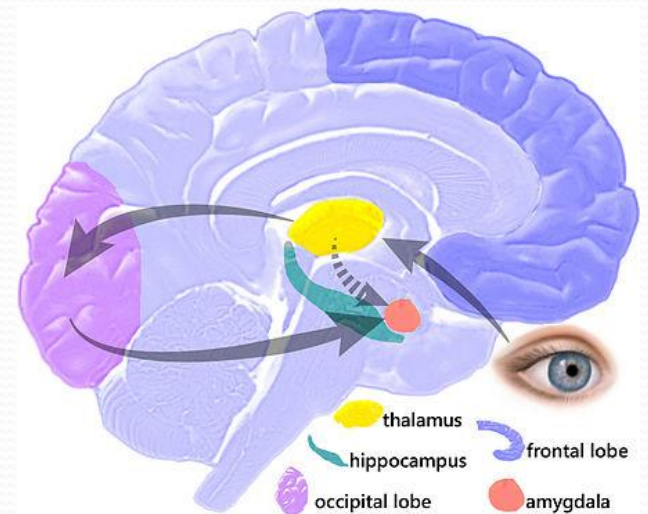


If your child has lost all control, “flipped their lid” or is “Seeing red” they are having a true tantrum.

Fight, Flight or Freeze

Your child is still learning how to regulate their emotions. When something is upsetting they can go into a fight, flight or freeze state. Their Amygdala “Hijacks” or takes over.

Cortisol and Adrenaline are released creating the body's response to fight, flight or freeze.



A “fake” Tantrum can be **stopped** if you can do the following:

- Calm your child down
- Distract
- Reason with your child
- Give in to the request
- Threaten punishment

This kind of behavior is learned and reinforced with the parent's reaction.

Scientists Have Analyzed Tantrum Screams

- 2011, researchers recorded tantrums and analyzed the screams. They found:
 - All tantrums follow a pattern.
 - All tantrums have multiple peaks of screaming and crying.
 - You can't make the tantrum stop, you have to let it run its course.

Screaming, Yelling, Whining and Crying: Categorical and intensity differences in Vocal Expressions of Anger and Sadness in Children's Tantrums James A. Greena, Pamela G. Whitney, and Michael Potegal Department of Psychology, University of Connecticut, Departments of Pediatrics & Neurology, University of Minnesota Medical Center 2011

What can you do?

- Stay calm
- Resist giving into the request
- Try not to talk or communicate using a few words
- Make sure your child is safe
- If you can, remove yourself from the room
- If you are calm, practice modeling your calm behavior
- Listen for the “highs and lows”

If you are calm...

Sit next to your child to model how to calm yourself down using body language and few words:

- Put your hand on your heart and take big deep breathes.
- Breathe out using pursed-lips.
- Close your eyes.
- Give yourself a hug.
- Take a sip of water using a bottle or straw.
- If your child starts to hit you may have to step away.



Mirror Neurons

“Mirror neurons are a type of brain cell that respond equally when we perform an action and when we witness someone else perform the same action.”

These could be the reason human beings can learn emotional regulation, empathy and socialization.

Parents are also impacted by these neurons, so it is important that you feel calm during the tantrum.

Listen for the highs and lows

Researchers discovered that there are several peaks of screaming followed by sad whimpers or cries. When you do not hear the peaks of anger or screams and you only hear crying, the tantrum is over.



When it's time to intervene

- Approach your child when the tantrum is over.
- Sit next to them.
- Ask them if they want a hug.
- When holding them be silent and just take deep breaths.
- Acknowledge their frustration and sadness. “It looks like you are sad. I’m sorry you are so sad.”
- When they are fully recovered talk to them about their behavior.
- Make time for reconciliation. Picking up toys, getting an ice pack if someone was hit, but never give a punishment.

Next time, look for a pattern

“Understanding that tantrums have a rhythm can not only help parents know when to intervene, but also give them a sense of control, Green said. That's because, when looked at scientifically, tantrums are no different than thunderstorms or other natural phenomena. Studying them as scientific subjects rather than experiencing them like parents can **cause the tantrums to stop feeling traumatic and even become interesting**”

Avoid a tantrum by staying C.A.L.M.

- **Communicate well.** Model excellent communication skills and avoid yelling and arguing in front of the child. Ask the child about their feelings. Adults can provide examples of feeling words such as "angry," "sad," "tired," or "hungry."

CALM

- **Attention.** Give the child positive attention. Examples of positive attention include reading to the child, playing games, and including the child in routine activities such as cooking and cleaning.

CALM

- **Let** the child share their feelings and listen. Allow the child to control decisions by offering choices that would be acceptable to the caregiver. Avoid saying "no," too often unless it pertains to a health or safety issue.

CALM

- **Make** naptimes and mealtimes a daily routine as much as possible. If the toddler is away from home or misses their usual mealtimes, have simple, healthy snacks such as dried fruit or crackers available. Prepare children with expectations such as when bedtime will occur, or when there will be a change in activities.

Thank You!



Times have changed, and science has made great progress, and so has our work; but our principles have only been confirmed, and along with them our conviction that mankind can hope for a solution to its problems, among which the most urgent are those of peace and unity, only by turning its attention and energies to the discovery of the child and to the development of the great potentialities of the human personality in the course of its formation.

(Maria Montessori)