



It is much easier to prevent temper tantrums than it is to manage them once they have erupted. Here are some tips for preventing temper tantrums and some things you can say:

- Reward children for positive attention rather than negative attention. During situations when they are prone to temper tantrums, catch them when they are being good and say such things as, "Nice job sharing with your friend."
- Do not ask children to do something when they must do what you ask. Do not ask, "Would you like to eat now?" Say, "It's supertime now."
- Give children control over little things whenever possible by giving choices. A little bit of power given to the child can stave off the big power struggles later. "Which do you want to do first, brush your teeth or put on your pajamas?"
- Keep off-limit objects out of sight and therefore out of mind. In an art activity keep the scissors out of reach if children are not ready to use them safely.
- Distract children by redirection to another activity when they tantrum over something they should not do or cannot have. Say, "Let's read a book together."
- Change environments, thus removing the child from the source of the temper tantrum. Say, "Let's go for a walk."
- Choose your battles. Teach children how to make a request without a temper tantrum and then honor the request. Say, "Try asking for that toy nicely and I'll get it for you."
- Make sure that children are well rested and fed in situations in which a temper tantrum is a likely possibility. Say, "Supper is almost ready, here's a cracker for now."
- Avoid boredom. Say, "You have been working for a long time. Let's take a break and do something fun."
- Create a safe environment that children can explore without getting into trouble. Childproof your home or classroom so children can explore safely.
- Increase your tolerance level. Are you available to meet the child's reasonable needs? Evaluate how many times you say, "No." Avoid fighting over minor things.
- Establish routines and traditions that add structure. For teachers, start class with a sharing time and opportunity for interaction.
- Signal children before you reach the end of an activity so that they can get prepared for the transition. Say, "When the timer goes off 5 minutes from now it will be time to turn off the TV and go to bed."
- When visiting new places or unfamiliar people explain to the child beforehand what to expect. Say, "Stay with your assigned buddy in the museum."
- Provide pre-academic, behavioral, and social challenges that are at the child's developmental level so that the child does not become frustrated.
- Keep a sense of humor to divert the child's attention and surprise the child out of the tantrum.

Post-Tantrum Management