



Toddler Tantrums

Your toddler has a lot of exciting developmental milestones ahead of them and you don't want to miss a thing. From dressing and undressing, potty training, early sentences, drawing, and so much more. However, this can also be a time of testing boundaries, strong opinions and new emotions.

Children have tantrums because they can't express themselves, so they cry, scream, kick and shout and even bite. It usually happens when they are 2-3 years old but can happen at any age and can feel very embarrassing for you as a parent. Tantrums happen for all sorts of reasons - being tired or hungry, wanting something they can't have or not having their colour choice of spoon; how could you have known that giving your toddler the red spoon and not the green one at lunchtime would end in disaster? It may also be a way of getting your attention so look for good behaviour and praise them as often as you can.

Handy Tips

Stay Calm: This can be very hard, but if you become stressed your child will pick up on it. Keeping calm and in control shows your toddler that you are not overwhelmed by his or her emotions and while he or she feels out of control, you are in control.

Prevention: Being able to avoid your child's tantrums is an important piece of advice (however, this is not always possible) but if you know what triggers the tantrum do your best to avoid it, for example, if a visit to the shops straight after nursery often prompts a meltdown, consider going at a different time maybe without your child.

Distraction: Help your child calm down by distracting them with something else, such as reading a book, or something else to look at. If you do something such as giving treats in the hope of calming them down, this may be quick fix but can

end up with your child thinking that a tantrum will be rewarded. Have a drink or snack with you in case a child is genuinely hungry or thirsty.

Choose your Battles: Is what your child wants to do really a problem? This is a good question to consider and whilst you may not want to take your child out in a completely mis-matched outfit, on some occasions, does it really matter and is it worth the repercussions of the tantrum which may make you late for where ever you were going?

Give them a hug: Children can often feel overwhelmed by the strong emotions experienced during a tantrum, they may just want your attention and giving the child a hug might help. However, this will not work if the child has already too far gone in the tantrum; there is little point in trying to reason with an angry toddler (which is the dominant emotion early on during a tantrum), unfortunately for you, the best thing to do in this instance is wait. Research suggests that once the toddler is past feeling angry the emotion to follow is sadness and a sad toddler will need a cuddle.

It is not easy being a toddler, experiencing new feelings and not knowing how to deal with them; likewise, it is not always easy being the parent of a toddler trying to ride this emotional roller coaster! However, as your toddler develops they will be more able to manage their feelings through the developing use of language and a lot of the emotional turbulence will have settled down by the time they move to pre-school. Time is all that is needed.

Support

If you are finding your toddler's behaviour a challenge, our BLS Team will be happy to offer support and guidance to ensure that there is consistency between home and the nursery. They will work with you to help think of strategies which may work for your child; these can be, in the beginning, trial and error. There are also External Agencies who can offer support such as your Local Children's Centre, Health Visitor and GP.

It is important to remember you are not alone and many other parents will be experiencing similar, if not the same, kinds of behaviours in their child too.