



BRIGHT FUTURES HANDOUT ► PARENT

15 MONTH VISIT

Here are some suggestions from Bright Futures experts that may be of value to your family.

TALKING AND FEELING

- Try to give choices. Allow your child to choose between 2 good options, such as a banana or an apple, or 2 favorite books.
- Know that it is normal for your child to be anxious around new people. Be sure to comfort your child.
- Take time for yourself and your partner.
- Get support from other parents.
- Show your child how to use words.
 - Use simple, clear phrases to talk to your child.
 - Use simple words to talk about a book's pictures when reading.
 - Use words to describe your child's feelings.
 - Describe your child's gestures with words.

A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

- Put your child to bed at the same time every night. Early is better.
- Make the hour before bedtime loving and calm.
- Have a simple bedtime routine that includes a book.
- Try to tuck in your child when he is drowsy but still awake.
- Don't give your child a bottle in bed.
- Don't put a TV, computer, tablet, or smartphone in your child's bedroom.
- Avoid giving your child enjoyable attention if he wakes during the night. Use words to reassure and give a blanket or toy to hold for comfort.

TANTRUMS AND DISCIPLINE

- Use distraction to stop tantrums when you can.
- Praise your child when she does what you ask her to do and for what she can accomplish.
- Set limits and use discipline to teach and protect your child, not to punish her.
- Limit the need to say "No!" by making your home and yard safe for play.
- Teach your child not to hit, bite, or hurt other people.
- Be a role model.

HEALTHY TEETH

- Take your child for a first dental visit if you have not done so.
- Brush your child's teeth twice each day with a small smear of fluoridated toothpaste, no more than a grain of rice.
- Wean your child from the bottle.
- Brush your own teeth. Avoid sharing cups and spoons with your child. Don't clean her pacifier in your mouth.

Helpful Resources: Poison Help Line: 800-222-1222

Information About Car Safety Seats: www.safercar.gov/parents | Toll-free Auto Safety Hotline: 888-327-4236

15 MONTH VISIT—PARENT

✓ SAFETY

- Make sure your child's car safety seat is rear facing until he reaches the highest weight or height allowed by the car safety seat's manufacturer. In most cases, this will be well past the second birthday.
- Never put your child in the front seat of a vehicle that has a passenger airbag. The back seat is the safest.
- Everyone should wear a seat belt in the car.
- Keep poisons, medicines, and lawn and cleaning supplies in locked cabinets, out of your child's sight and reach.
- Put the Poison Help number into all phones, including cell phones. Call if you are worried your child has swallowed something harmful. Don't make your child vomit.
- Place gates at the top and bottom of stairs. Install operable window guards on windows at the second story and higher. Keep furniture away from windows.
- Turn pan handles toward the back of the stove.
- Don't leave hot liquids on tables with tablecloths that your child might pull down.
- Have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on every floor. Test them every month and change the batteries every year. Make a family escape plan in case of fire in your home.

WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR CHILD'S 18 MONTH VISIT

We will talk about

- Handling stranger anxiety, setting limits, and knowing when to start toilet training
- Supporting your child's speech and ability to communicate
- Talking, reading, and using tablets or smartphones with your child
- Eating healthy
- Keeping your child safe at home, outside, and in the car

Consistent with *Bright Futures: Guidelines for Health Supervision of Infants, Children, and Adolescents*, 4th Edition

For more information, go to <https://brightfutures.aap.org>.

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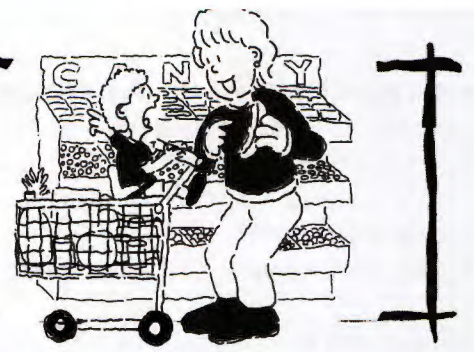
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Temper Tantrums: A NORMAL PART OF GROWING UP



Strong emotions are hard for a young child to hold inside. When children feel frustrated, angry, or disappointed, they often express themselves by crying, screaming, or stomping up and down. As a parent, you may feel angry, helpless, or embarrassed. Temper tantrums are a normal part of your child's development as he learns self-control. In fact, almost all children have tantrums between the ages of 1 and 3. You've heard them called "the terrible twos." The good news is that by age 4, temper tantrums usually stop.

Why do children have tantrums?

Your young child is busy learning many things about her world. She is eager to take control. She wants to be independent and may try to do more than her skills will allow. She wants to make her own choices and often may not cope well with not getting her way. She is even less able to cope when she is tired, hungry, frustrated, or frightened. Controlling her temper may be one of the most difficult lessons to learn.

Temper tantrums are a way for your child to let off steam when she is upset. Following are some of the reasons your child may have a temper tantrum:

- Your child may not fully understand what you are saying or asking, and may get confused.
- Your child may become upset when others cannot understand what she is saying.
- Your child may not have the words to describe her feelings and needs. After 3 years of age, most children can express their feelings, so temper tantrums taper off. Children who are not able to express their feelings very well with words are more likely to continue to have tantrums.
- Your child has not yet learned to solve problems on her own and gets discouraged easily.
- Your child may have an illness or other physical problem that keeps her from expressing how she feels.
- Your child may be hungry, but may not recognize it.
- Your child may be tired or not getting enough sleep.
- Your child may be anxious or uncomfortable.
- Your child may be reacting to stress or changes at home.
- Your child may be jealous of a friend or sibling. Children often want what other children have or the attention they receive.
- Your child may not yet be able to do the things she can imagine, such as walking or running, climbing down stairs or from furniture, drawing things, or making toys work.

How to help prevent temper tantrums

As a parent, you can sometimes tell when tantrums are coming. Your child may seem moody, cranky, or difficult. He may start to whine and whimper. It may seem as if nothing will make him happy. Finally, he may start to cry, kick, scream, fall to the ground, or hold his breath. Other times, a tantrum may come on suddenly for no obvious reason. You should not be surprised if your child has tantrums only in front of you. This is one way of testing your rules and

A word about...safety

Many times, you will have to tell your child "no" to protect her from harm or injury. For example, the kitchen and bathroom can be hazardous places for your child. Your child will have trouble understanding why you will not let her play there. This is a common cause of a tantrum.

"Childproof" your home and make dangerous areas or objects off-limits.

Keep an eye on your child at all times. After telling your child "no," never leave her alone in a situation that could be hazardous. Take away dangerous objects from your child immediately and replace them with something safe. It is up to you to keep your child safe and teach her how to protect herself from getting hurt. Be consistent and clear about safety.

limits. Many children will not act out their feelings around others and are more cautious with strangers. Children feel safer showing their feelings to the people they trust.

You will not be able to prevent all tantrums, but the following suggestions may help reduce the chances of a tantrum:

- **Encourage your child to use words** to tell you how he is feeling, such as "I'm really mad." Try to understand how he is feeling and suggest words he can use to describe his feelings.
- **Set reasonable limits** and don't expect your child to be perfect. Give simple reasons for the rules you set, and don't change the rules.
- **Keep a daily routine** as much as possible, so your child knows what to expect.
- **Avoid situations that will frustrate your child**, such as playing with children or toys that are too advanced for your child's abilities.
- **Avoid long outings or visits** where your child has to sit still or cannot play for long periods of time. If you have to take a trip, bring along your child's favorite book or toy to entertain him.
- **Be prepared with healthy snacks when your child gets hungry.**
- **Make sure your child is well rested**, especially before a busy day or stressful activity.
- **Distract your child** from activities likely to lead to a tantrum. Suggest different activities. If possible, being silly, playful, or making a joke can help ease a tense situation. Sometimes, something as simple as changing locations can prevent a tantrum. For example, if you are indoors, try taking your child outside to distract his attention.
- **Be choosy about saying "no."** When you say no to every demand or request your child makes, it will frustrate him. Listen carefully to requests. When a request is not too unreasonable or inconvenient, consider saying yes. When your child's safety is involved, do not change your decision because of a tantrum.

- **Let your child choose whenever possible.** For example, if your child resists a bath, make it clear that he will be taking a bath, but offer a simple decision he can make on his own. Instead of saying, "Do you want to take a bath?" Try saying, "It's time for your bath. Would you like to walk upstairs or have me carry you?"
- **Set a good example.** Avoid arguing or yelling in front of your child.

What to do when tantrums occur

When your child has a temper tantrum, follow the suggestions listed below:

1. Distract your child by calling his attention to something else, such as a new activity, book, or toy. Sometimes just touching or stroking a child will calm him. You may need to gently restrain or hold your child. Interrupt his behavior with a light comment like, "Did you see what the kitty is doing?" or "I think I heard the doorbell." Humor or something as simple as a funny face can also help.
2. Try to remain calm. If you shout or become angry, it is likely to make things worse. Remember, the more attention you give this behavior, the more likely it is to happen again.
3. Minor displays of anger such as crying, screaming, or kicking can usually be ignored. Stand nearby or hold your child without talking until he calms down. This shows your support. If you cannot stay calm, leave the room.
4. Some temper tantrums cannot be ignored. The following behaviors should not be ignored and are *not* acceptable:
 - Hitting or kicking parents or others
 - Throwing things in a dangerous way
 - Prolonged screaming or yelling

Use a cooling-off period or a "time-out" to remove your child from the source of his anger. Take your child away from the situation and hold him or give him some time alone to calm down and regain control. For children old enough to understand, a good rule of thumb for a time-out is 1 minute of time for every year of your child's age. (For example, a 4 year old would get a 4-minute time-out.) But even 15 seconds will work. If you cannot stay calm, leave the room. Wait a minute or two, or until his crying stops, before returning. Then help him get interested in something else. If your child is old enough, talk about what happened and discuss other ways to deal with it next time.

For more information, ask your pediatrician about the American Academy of Pediatrics brochure *Discipline and Your Child*.

You should never punish your child for temper tantrums. He may start to keep his anger or frustration inside, which can be unhealthy. Your response to tantrums should be calm and understanding. As your child grows, he will learn to deal with his strong emotions. Remember, it is normal for children to test their parents' rules and limits.

Do not give in by offering rewards

Do not reward your child for stopping a tantrum. Rewards may teach your child that a temper tantrum will help her get her way. When tantrums do not accomplish anything for your child, they are less likely to continue.

You may also feel guilty about saying "no" to your child at times. Be consistent and avoid sending mixed signals. When parents don't clearly enforce certain rules, it is harder for children to understand which rules are firm and which ones are not. Be sure you are having some fun each day with your child. Think carefully about the rules you set and don't set too many. Discuss with those who care for your child which rules are really needed and be firm about them. Respond the same way every time your child breaks the rules.

When temper tantrums are serious

Your child should have fewer temper tantrums by the middle of his fourth year. Between tantrums, his behavior should seem normal and healthy. Like every child, yours will grow and learn at his own pace. It may take time for him to learn how to control his temper. When the outbursts are severe or happen too often, they may be an early sign of emotional problems. Talk to your pediatrician if your child causes harm to himself or others during tantrums, holds his breath and faints, or if the tantrums get worse after age 4. Your pediatrician will make sure there are no serious physical or psychological problems causing the tantrums. He or she can also give you advice to help you deal with these outbursts.

It is important to realize that temper tantrums are a normal part of growing up. Tantrums are not easy to deal with, and they can be a little scary for you and your child. Using a loving and understanding approach will help your child through this part of his development.

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From your doctor

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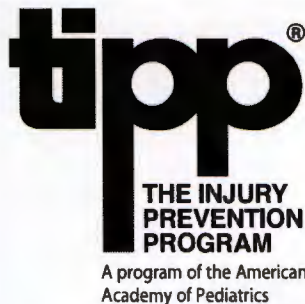
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Activities for Toddlers 16-20 Months Old



<p>Toddlers love to play in water. Put squeezable objects in the bathtub, such as sponges or squeeze bottles, along with dump-and-pour toys (cups, bowls).</p>	<p>Toddlers are excited about bubbles. Let your toddler try to blow bubbles or watch you blow bubbles through a straw. Bubbles are fun to pop and chase, too.</p>	<p>Pretend play becomes even more fun at this age. Encourage your toddler to have a doll or stuffed toy do what he does—walk, go to bed, dance, eat, and jump. Include the doll in daily activities or games.</p>	<p>Make instant pudding together. Let your toddler “help” by dumping pudding, pouring milk, and stirring. The results are good to eat or can be used for finger painting.</p>	<p>Use boxes or buckets for your toddler to throw bean bags or balls into. Practice overhand release of the ball or bean bag.</p>
<p>Play Hide and Seek. Your toddler can hide with another person or by herself for you to find. Then take your turn to hide and let your toddler find you.</p>	<p>Toddlers love movement. Take him to the park to ride on rocking toys, swings, and small slides. You may want to hold your toddler in your lap on the swing and on the slide at first.</p>	<p>Sing action songs together such as “Ring Around the Rosy,” “Itsy-Bitsy Spider,” and “This Is the Way We Wash Our Hands.” Do actions together. Move with the rhythm. Wait for your toddler to anticipate the action.</p>	<p>Put favorite toys in a laundry basket slightly out of reach of your toddler or in a clear container with a tight lid. Wait for your toddler to request the objects, giving her a reason to communicate. Respond to her requests.</p>	<p>Your toddler may become interested in “art activities.” Use large nontoxic crayons and a large pad of paper. Felt-tip markers are more exciting with their bright colors. Let your toddler scribble his own picture as you make one.</p>
<p>A favorite pull toy often is a small wagon or an old purse for collecting things. Your toddler can practice putting objects in and out of it. It can also be used to store favorite items.</p>	<p>Make a picture book by putting common, simple pictures cut from magazines into a photo album. Your toddler will enjoy photos of herself and family members. Pictures of pets are favorites, too.</p>	<p>Toddlers are interested in playing with balls. Use a beach ball to roll, throw, and kick.</p>	<p>Play the “What’s that?” game by pointing to clothing, toys, body parts, objects, or pictures and asking your toddler to name them. If your toddler doesn’t respond, name it for him and encourage imitation of the words.</p>	<p>Fill a plastic tub with cornmeal or oatmeal. Put in kitchen spoons, strainers, measuring cups, funnels, or plastic containers. Toddlers can fill, dump, pour, and learn about textures and use of objects as tools. Tasting won’t be harmful.</p>
<p>Toddlers will begin putting objects together. Simple puzzles (separate pieces) with knobs are great. Putting keys into locks and letters into mailbox slots is fun, too.</p>	<p>Get two containers (coffee cups or cereal bowls) that look the same and a small toy. Hide the toy under one container while your toddler watches. Ask her, “Where did it go?” Eventually you can play the old shell game (moving the containers after you hide the toy).</p>	<p>Help your toddler sort objects into piles. He can help you sort laundry (put socks in one pile and shirts in another). Play “clean up” games. Have your toddler put toys on specified shelves or boxes.</p>	<p>Save milk cartons or gelatin or pudding boxes. Your toddler can stack them to make towers. You can also stuff grocery bags with newspapers and tape them shut to make big blocks.</p>	<p>Lay out your toddler’s clothes on the bed before dressing. Ask her to give you a shirt, pants, shoes, and socks. This is an easy way to learn the names of common items.</p>



Home Water Hazards for Young Children

Each year many young children drown in swimming pools, other bodies of water, and standing water around the home such as

- Bathtubs, even with baby seats or bathtub “supporting ring” devices
- Buckets and pails, especially 5-gallon buckets and diaper pails
- Ice chests with melted ice
- Toilets
- Hot tubs, spas, and whirlpools
- Irrigation ditches, post holes, and wells
- Fish ponds, fountains

Children must be watched by an adult at all times when in or near water. Children may drown in an inch or 2 of water. Stay within an arm’s length of your child.

Other safety activities include the following:

- Empty all buckets, pails, and bathtubs completely after each use—do not leave them filled and unattended.
- Keep young children out of the bathroom unless they are closely watched. Teach others in the home to keep the bathroom door closed. Install a hook-and-eye latch or doorknob cover on the outside of the door. Always close the toilet lid, and consider using a toilet lid latch.
- Never leave a child alone in a bathtub or in the care of another child, even for a moment. A bath seat is not a safety device and is not a substitute for adult supervision.
- Use a rigid, lockable cover on a hot tub, spa, or whirlpool, or fence in all 4 sides as you would for a swimming pool.
- The hottest temperature at the faucet should be no more than 120°F to avoid burns. In many cases you can adjust your water heater.
- Throw away or tightly cover water or chemical mixtures after use.
- Watch children closely when they are playing near wells, open post holes, or irrigation or drainage ditches. Fill in empty holes or have fences installed to protect your child.
- Learn CPR and know how to get emergency help.

From Your Doctor

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