

## Parenting in Focus: Ways to discipline

It isn't easy to know if you should be disciplining a young person or what behavior you should ignore.

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It isn't easy knowing how to discipline or even when to discipline a baby or a toddler. It isn't easy to know if you should be disciplining a young person at all or what behavior you should ignore.

Young children are naturally curious and that is how it should be. The best way to handle some of the curiosity that is bound to lead them into problems is to eliminate temptations and no-nos.

Certainly cleaning supplies and medications should be kept well out of reach. Even special equipment such as video equipment or expensive items such as jewelry should be carefully put away.

When you are having issues with your child's behavior, determine if there is a cause for his behavior. Is he tired and has he been playing a long time? Has he become hungry from being on the go too long? Is he upset because he is not getting what he wants when he wants it? Is he feeling neglected and wanting attention?

How you handle temper tantrums now may play a large part in how your preschooler acts when he or she gets older. Incorrect handling could very well lead to behavior problems in the future.

Children of any age can have temper tantrums. Actually, parents can have them too. But for this article we will be discussing young children having temper tantrums or discipline problems.

Handling a child having a tantrum is complex. However, there are some things you can do to help make it easier for you and for him:

- Relax

Take a deep breath. In fact, waiting a few seconds might even make things a bit easier to handle.

- Take control

He has lost control so when you take charge it helps. One easy way to show him you have control is to move him just a few feet away from where he is ... especially if that is the candy counter.

- Do not yell

This will only make things worse. Keep in mind the goal is for him to regain control and the tantrum isn't the issue. Tell him you can see how upset he is. Try hugging him and perhaps the restraint of that hug will help him calm down. Speak calmly to him.

- Do not give in

The worst thing you can do is give him the item he is having a temper tantrum about. Your child is smart and will quickly learn that throwing a tantrum is a good way of getting what he wants.

- Offer him choice

You can ask him if he would rather go to the car or stay in the store. You can talk with him about what book he might like to read this afternoon. The goal is for him to regain control-not to feel that you are bribing him to stop having the tantrum.

- If all else fails, leave with him

Return to the car or to your home. You will find that time will be on your side because temper tantrums take a lot of energy from both of you.

It is important to not spank, hit, or slap a child of any age. Babies and toddlers are especially unlikely to be able to make any connection between their behavior and physical punishment. They will only feel the pain of the hit.

Make sure you tell your child you love him. Let him hear from you that you understand his frustration or that he is hungry or tired. Ask him to calm down and hug him. You need to remember you are modeling good behavior for him by not losing your cool or raising your voice.

Your calm demeanor alone may calm them down. The opposite is also true when you react poorly and you become out of control ([childdevelopmentinfo.com/ages-stages/preschooler-development-3-6/preschool-temper-tantrums](http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/ages-stages/preschooler-development-3-6/preschool-temper-tantrums)).

Make the problem of today the teaching of correct behavior for tomorrow.

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