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The Three R's - How To Handle A Tantrum

By Maureen Arnold

Tantrums - the bane of the parenting world - need not be quite as feared as they have been in the past. Why? Parenting in the last several years has undergone a quiet revolution, a revolution that, while evincing a truly valuable outcome, has gone largely unnoticed in the general population.

What is the gist of the parenting revolution? Understanding. Understanding what makes our children tick, what makes them act and behave the way they do, which in turn leads to more effective parenting skills and tools for the rest of us.

One of the blocks in this revolutionary foundation of understanding is the 3 R's of tantrum control. The 3 R's are Reiteration, Request and Repetition. How exactly does this work? It's actually VERY simple, and will dramatically change your toddler's response to stressful situations.

So let's jump right into a typical meltdown. Two year old Johnny wants an ice-cream sandwich at 9 am, and he has not even eaten his breakfast yet. Mommy says no. Johnny immediately flings himself to the floor in frustration and proceeds to cry and scream that he wants ice-cream while Mommy stands there staring in resignation at the crumpled little ball of emotion on the kitchen floor.

Sound familiar? I thought so. Let's change the scenario a little bit. Two year old Johnny still wants ice-cream for breakfast. Mommy knows Johnny cannot have ice-cream for breakfast, but instead of saying no, Mommy remembers the three R's of tantrum control, because she knows what is coming when she says no. Instead, Mommy says to Johnny, "You want ice-cream for breakfast?" Johnny says "Ice cream!" Mommy says, "You want ice-cream for BREAKFAST?" This will continue until she knows that Johnny knows that she understands what he wants. This is Reiteration. This is repeating the "order" that your child has given you until you are sure that they get that YOU get it.

Next, Mommy moves on to the second R - Request. This is where Mommy puts in HER request, now that Johnny knows she understands him. Mommy says to Johnny, "I understand that you want ice-cream for breakfast, but you need to eat a banana instead." At this point, Johnny is much more likely to acquiesce to Mommy's request because he knows that Mommy understands what he wants.

At first, Mommy may need to revert back to step one a few times (Repetition), as well, to get through to Johnny that she understands. Toddlers can be pretty thick, especially when they are frustrated, which

is the ultimate emotion behind a tantrum. It may take several repetitions before your toddler understands that you GET IT, and that they are being heard.

The key to the three R's is making sure your frustrated little guy or gal understands that you ARE hearing their request. Another great way to head off tantrums during the day is to make a few requests of your toddler that they can say no or yes to and win no matter what the answer is - that way they feel like they get what they want many times anyway. A little understanding and help from the parents can go a long way toward making your toddler feel valued and heard in his world of giants.

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Toddler Tantrums

By Anne Cavicchi

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Toddler Tantrums!

Remember the adorable little cherub you brought home from the hospital?

Ah, It seems like only yesterday. Now your baby has grown into a toddler. The world to them is filled with wonderment, learning and discovery... and frustrations. Things are wonderful, when all of a sudden, your little cherub turns into a little monster.

Your toddler has just shown you the power of the 'T' word... Tantrum. It is something every parent dreads, but it is inevitable at one point or another.

A tantrum is like an emotional blown fuse. It is not something your child can prevent. Tantrums generally occur when your child is very frustrated. The load of frustration builds up inside him until he is so full of tension that only an explosion can release it. He may run around the room wildly screaming, he may throw himself on the floor kicking and screaming. He seems to be totally out of control, and he is.

So what's a parent to do?

You can help to prevent tantrums by organizing your toddler's life so that frustration stays within his tolerance limits most of the time. This is not easy. You will not always manage to strike the right balance between the amount of frustration that is useful to your toddler's learning and the amount which is too much.

When a tantrum does occur:

Prevent your child from hurting himself or hurting others during a tantrum

Don't scream or yell at your child

Don't argue with your child

Don't let the child feel rewarded or punished because of a tantrum

Don't let tantrums embarrass you into giving in to your child's demands in public

No matter how much you hate your toddler's tantrums, he hates them more! If your child has frequent tantrums, take heed. Toddlers who have a lot of tantrums are often lively children who are also highly intelligent. Remember, it's not easy being a toddler! The good news? As they grow up, they will grow out of it.

Until they are teenagers.

Anne Cavicchi is a Canadian wife and mother of one boy and two step-daughters. She also owns Annie's Maternity Corner where you'll find everything you need for pregnancy and baby! Great products, articles, information and more to see you through pregnancy and baby's first years at Annie's. <http://www.maternitycorner.com>

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